

**EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
SELECTED EMPLOYEES AT ETHEKWINI  
MUNICIPALITY: A CASE STUDY**

**By**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree, Master of Education in  
Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy (ELMP),  
School of Education**

**Faculty of Education**

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**March 2019**

## DECLARATION

I, **Nomusa Sithole**, declare that this dissertation is my own work. This work has not been submitted for degree purposes at any other University. I have acknowledged and shown all the sources that I have utilised in completing this dissertation.

.....

Student's signature

.....

Date

.....

Supervisor's signature

.....

Date



30 May 2017

Ms Nomusa Sithole (971157955)  
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Dear Ms Sithole,

**Protocol reference number: HSS/0619/017M**

**Project title:** Exploring professional development experiences of selected employees at a municipality: A case study

**Approval Notification – Expedited Application**

In response to your application received on 24 May 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

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I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents whose support has been very important to me in finishing this work.

This work is also dedicated to my nephew Bayanda Sithole who has been very supportive and always willing to help.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Much appreciation is given to the Lord Almighty for giving me the strength to finish this work; Lord you are indeed great!

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to find out the experiences of employees at eThekweni municipality in relation to the professional development support they receive. Its objectives were to explore the experiences of selected eThekweni municipality employees regarding the professional development support they receive; to identify current challenges observed by selected employees in the provision of professional development; and to establish provision on how to enhance professional development in eThekweni municipality. The study employed the constructive/interpretive paradigm which allowed the selected employees to share their views and provide the researcher with an in-depth understanding of their experiences in professional development. Since the paradigm uses a continuous course of understanding reality through conversation, the study adopted a case study research design. Probability was utilised in applying a systematic sampling procedure for selecting twelve employees from eThekweni Municipality to participate in the study. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted in each of the four regions of the eThekweni Municipality. The interview schedule used to probe participants about their experiences of professional development in their organisation was guided by the research questions.

The findings revealed that some participants view professional development as relevant since it helped them execute their duties effectively, whilst others found it irrelevant owing to monotonous courses, training and programmes. The decisions pertaining to what professional development to offer and who it should be offered to seemed different with each region. In terms of challenges encountered in the provision and support of professional development, inadequate budgets, lack of needs analysis, limited external training, improper communication channels and using professional development as compliance and not a strategic tool, were cited. To counter these challenges the following suggestions were made: Municipality should offer recognised certificates of competence after completion of a course, training or programme; having qualified trainers with expertise; offering relevant programmes and increasing budgets for professional development.

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## **ACRONYMS**

CBT	Computer-based training
EMA	eThekwini Municipal Academy
EMLP	Education Management, Leadership and Policy
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
ODETP	Occupational Directed Education, Training and Development Practices
SDP	Skills Development Practitioner
TANESCO	Tanzania Electricity Supply Company
WSP	Work Skills Plan

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

With the advent of technology, advancement in the country has appealed for its fair place in the South African civilisation, comprising mutually the private and public sector (Susomrith & Coetzer, 2013). Financial arrangements have been made by the South African government for a large amount of subsidy for skills development of workforces, particularly at local administration level. For a considerable period, municipalities in the South African framework have in general made noble improvement in their various fields of interest. However, Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk (2015) report that these municipalities have failed to invest in their personnel in training and developing them for the technical hitches of the contemporary, internationally competitive globe. It is the obligation of municipalities in South Africa to make certain that they accomplish an operative responsibility in contributing to the professional development of their workforces (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2015). This is because the knowledge-based economies of the contemporary world not only need technology or equipment that distinguishes organisations, but also a workforce that is competent to execute their jobs well. Coetzee (2013) emphasises that the distinction rests on the municipalities' personnel and the manners in which the personnel is acknowledged, utilised, as well as maintained. The immensely increasing knowledge base, as well as the shift towards technological innovations demands a workforce that is competitive by modernising and upgrading their skills and knowledge frequently to be competent to execute their duties and responsibilities commendably (Bates & Davis, 2010). In addition, ratepayers always assess the value of products consumed and services owing to existing economic constraints. As such, municipalities being a service delivery organisation ought to focus on professionally developing their workforces to offer effective service delivery to their ratepayers (Bates & Davis, 2010).

This study therefore, explores the nature of professional development opportunities and programmes that are made available to the municipal staff within eThekweni Municipality. The above-mentioned highlight the importance of skills that can enable municipalities to be competitive in the current technological environment. This chapter provides a background to the study, statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the study, as well as the research

questions. It further presents the significance of the study, the location of the study and concludes with a brief outline of the dissertation.

## **1.2 Background to the study**

Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996) states that the local scope of government should have municipalities; it also elaborates on the structure, objects, as well as the functions of municipalities. As stated in the Constitution (RSA, 1996), municipalities are predominantly responsible for service delivery in the country. The South African government owing to historical realities, has put substantial efforts to encourage municipalities on local administration to capitalise on the professional improvement of its workforces among other things (Tailor, 2000). There are many factors that confront a developing country such as South Africa: technology advancement, the need for reformation and downscaling, competitive pressures, the reduced levels of literacy, numerical competence and the accumulating multiplicity of the personnel are some of the concerns that push municipalities to reorient workforces (Pollock, 2009). Municipalities encounter intricate challenges to develop modern, competent, knowledge-based and effective employees. All these pressures require the government at local level to upscale professional development activities so that its workforce becomes competent and competitive. Part of the reformation of local administration as well as human resource growth schemes have encountered several difficulties in advancing workforces in municipalities. Consequently, it is now the obligation of municipalities to transmute their workforces to be developmentally participatory, adaptive, and open to the different societies that need service (Ratcliffe, 2013).

Nevertheless, as argued by Van der Walt, Venter, Phutiagae, Van Niekerk, Khalo, and Nealer (2017), municipalities are overwhelmed with severe tailbacks; for instance, poor leadership and pitiable attitudes towards adaptation of municipal service in an operative way. Improvement of mechanisms such as skills, competencies, knowledge and attitude are facets that construct a principal element of the modernisation of the South African civilization (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2017). The World Bank Group (2018) emphasises that as the globe's economies battle to generate additional and improved employments, training can be utilised as a means of building capacity for development. At one time, the economy existed, constructed on mass production. Lately, the economy turned out to be subjugated by service industries and technology that need innovations, cross-functionality, speed, as well as strong customer relations. Van der Walt *et al.* (2007) stress that municipalities mandate and search for

workforce that possesses detailed skills, knowledge and attitudes, as well as a cautious attempt to make it obligatory to facilitate the acquisition of such skills through continuous training.

There are other scholars such as Roux (2011) who emphasise the need for skills acquisition and argue that the progress of any organisation is meticulously linked to the advancement of its workforce. Consequently, once the workforce does not grow and progress in its profession, a static municipality will most possibly ensue (Roux, 2011). To equip employees with suitable knowledge, attitudes, and skills has become costly for municipalities, especially if the employees come from unqualified backgrounds. For that reason, municipalities have an immense obligation to subsidise active professional development programmes for their workforce. The moment a worker has been recruited, professional development turns out to be a responsibility of the organisation and a liability if not done (World Bank Group, 2018). While the employee may be employed possessing certain sets of abilities, knowledge, and skills, if the duties and obligation of the position shift, the organisation has a corporate social responsibility to capitalise in its human capital.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

For the past decade, the eThekweni Municipality appreciated the significance of investing in the development of its employees to remain practical and relevant (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2017). Such an inventiveness to produce a progressive municipality by capitalising in workforce training and schooling was critical to reach the latter. Several accomplishments were realised with the execution of human resource advancement (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2017). Nevertheless, the execution of human resource advancement enterprises is now a challenge for management in the eThekweni Municipality. Consequently, the ratepayer is not pleased with the service delivery offered by governments (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2016a; IOL, 2016b), particularly the local government or municipalities. The South African Payroll Association (SAPA) (2017) indicates that this is clear from protest actions by residents, as well as daily news reports about the poor service delivery in their areas. Moreover, the moment an organisational culture of ineffectiveness is formed, it is probable that honest, as well as skilled officers can step down, and it will turn out to be gradually challenging to draw skilful employees into municipalities. Challenges such as understanding and determination of training needs, relevant statutory frameworks, provision of proper training and the assessment of development programmes, all influence the employees receiving support for their professional development (IOL, 2016).

There are various factors not understood about skills deficits, personnel views and experiences regarding the training that form time.

#### **1.4 Aim of the Study**

The study aimed to discover the experiences of employees at eThekwini municipality in relation to the professional development support they receive.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the study**

- To explore the experiences of selected eThekwini municipality employees regarding the professional development support they receive.
- To identify the current challenges observed by selected employees in the provision of professional development.
- To establish provision on how to enhance professional development in eThekwini municipality.

#### **1.6 Research questions**

- What are the experiences of selected eThekwini Municipality employees regarding the professional development support they receive?
- What are the current challenges observed by selected employees in the provision of professional development?
- How can provision of professional development at eThekwini Municipality be enhanced?

#### **1.7 Significance of the study**

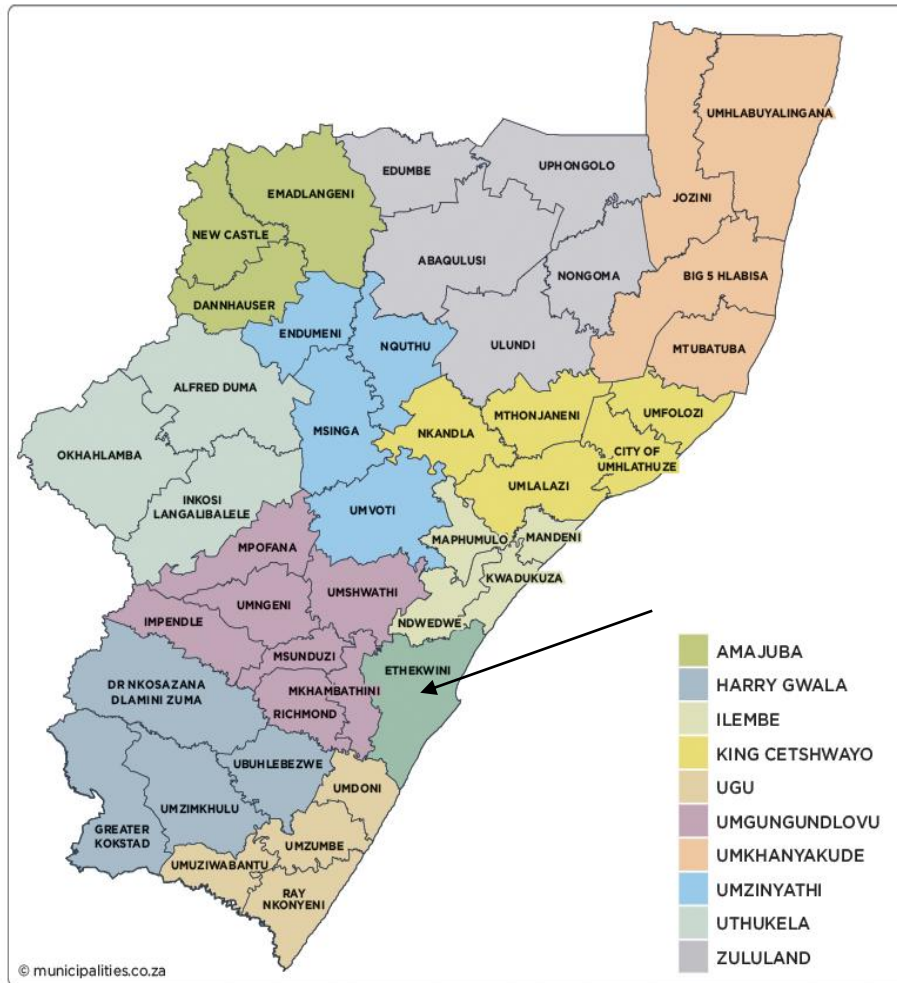
The present study was conducted within the framework of the eThekwini Municipality in relation to the municipal development statutory structures and the existing execution of human resource development practices. Constant development supports workers' organisational and personal knowledge, as well as skills efforts to transform behaviour (Tan, Hall & Boyce, 2003). The development of knowledge and skills also guarantees a more industrious workforce in the municipality. Workforce makes up the ultimate foundation for the wealth of countries (Susomrith & Coetzer, 2013). The workforce of South Africa is the nation's most significant asset. Therefore, workers must not only have general competences such as the aptitude to read and write, to converse successfully and to resolve difficulties in their households, societies and



in their place of work (Susomrith & Coetzer, 2013). With the strains of a rapidly changing and complex economy branded by augmenting utility of information, more intricate technologies and an overall increase in the skill requirements of jobs, workers ought to also have growing levels of applied competence (Surbhi, 2015). It is important that when a development training programme is offered, information and knowledge about its usefulness is provided. There is a need for knowledge from the perspectives of employees who underwent training on how they feel about various aspects including relevance. This study stands a good chance of addressing this knowledge gap. While the South African government recognises the importance of a skilful and knowledge-based labour force that can provide the community with excellent services (Mohapi, 2011), it is equally important to know how such skills are acquired. It is also important to know whether such a labour force embraces and takes ownership of skills as part of their professional development that enables them to fulfil their mandates.

### **1.8 Study location**

The study was conducted in the eThekweni Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Province. The eThekweni Municipality is one of the eight metropolitans in South Africa and a single municipal in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The study was conducted in the four regions of the municipality: North, South, West and Central regions. The eThekweni Municipality has 26000 (twenty-six thousand) permanent workers in total (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2017) and its boundary is 2297 square km (from Tongaat, Umkomaas, to Cato Ridge). The Metro's main purpose is service delivery, which provides the public with basic services such as electricity and water among others (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2017).



**Figure 1.1: Map of Kwazulu-Natal (Municipalities)**

## 1.9 Outline of the study

This dissertation consists of five chapters with Chapter One being an introductory chapter that provides an orientation to the study. Chapter Two provides a landscape of the debates surrounding professional development, its role as well as the manner that municipal personnel respond to such development training given to them. Chapter Three provides a detailed discussion about research design and methodology that was used to generate data that would ultimately address the research questions. Chapter Four may be regarded as the heart of the study in the sense that it provides evidence of what the participants may have said in response to questions posed to them by the researcher. Chapter Five concludes the study by providing the findings and making recommendations.

## **1.10 Conclusion**

The chapter focused on providing the background information about the problem being studied. It has given more details about the need of the study in terms of understanding research around the experiences of employees in municipalities in relation to the support they receive in their professional development. The chapter elucidated the statement of the problem and highlighted the challenges employees in municipalities face in the process of executing their professional duties. Other pertinent issues relating to the research problem such as research questions and the significance of the study was conducted. The next chapter pays attention to the review of literature.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The aim of the current chapter is to examine the literature related to the experiences of municipal employees regarding professional development. The literature review focuses on empirical studies in professional development and is drawn from both local and international perspectives. In presenting the literature, various perspectives on professional development (PD) are discussed. Thereafter, the importance of professional development, legislative framework and some professional development strategies and programmes that have been initiated in various contexts nationally and globally are provided, followed by effective professional development. Further, employees' experiences regarding professional development, challenges related to professional development, as well as perspectives about how such challenges have been overcome as a way of enhancing professional development provision to municipal staff are discussed. Finally, the chapter presents and discusses the theoretical framework that underpins the study and the conclusion.

#### **2.2 Conceptualising professional development**

There are multiple concepts that different scholars use to refer to professional development. The conceptualisation was based on areas of focus, core elements and a dependent variable or outcome.

##### **2.2.1 Training and development**

Gerber, Nel and Van-Dyk (2007), and Dessler (2008) refer to professional development as training and development which they define as the use of explicit means to train learning to professionals using different techniques. The scholars further note that these methods ought to be constantly improved. Development and training have a vital role in the functioning of every organisation and experience of employees at work. Training is a learning experience which intends to bring change on the employees' or individuals' performance on the job by developing their abilities and skills in the organisation. Therefore, organisations employing people need to train their employees (Driel, Beijaard & Verloop, 2011; Gerber *et al.*, 2007; Goe, Biggers & Croft, 2012). Drawing from literature, it is arguable that training is an intentional effort to impart knowledge, attitudes and skills to serve a particular purpose. This

brings out the idea that training is not merely intended at enhancing the employees' skills and knowledge regarding functional administrative duties.

Closely related to the ideas expressed by Gerber *et al.*, (2007), Driel *et al.*, (2011) and Goe *et al.*, (2012), Cole (2002) refers to professional development as education and training. Moreover, he defines training as a learning undertaking that is focused on attaining skills and knowledge for the resolution of a professional duty (Cole, 2002). Hence, investing in training as well as development can be considered as an excellent management exercise to sustain proper proficiency on the job. Viewed this way, one can argue that training enhances the knowledge, attitudes and skills of the employees grounded on the foundation laid from the training and additional outcome changes in other colleagues.

Based on the definitions above, it can be established that professional development is about inculcating new knowledge and skills in employees through training for the purpose of enhancing their performance, which may take different forms. In the framework of the current study, the eThekweni municipality employees are exposed to different training programmes that are meant to equip them with better relevant knowledge and skills required to satisfy the needs of clients.

### **2.2.2 Behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development**

According to Evans (2014), professional development takes attitudinal, behavioural, as well as intellectual forms. Evans (2014) further notes that behavioural development is the course whereby individuals' professional performance is altered with an outcome of enhanced professionalism to a degree of permanence. In addition, Evans (2014) views attitudinal development as the course whereby individuals' occupational attitudes are altered with the intention of enhancing professionalism. Also, intellectual development is seen as the course whereby individuals' occupational-related understanding, knowledge or comprehensive or reflective competence or capacity is altered with the outcome of enhanced professionalism and a degree of permanence (Evans, 2014). From this definition, it can be established that professional development is about attitudinal, behavioural, as well as intellectual development of workers. In the context of the study, the municipality employees were exposed to different job environments and sections to enhance their performance as well as service delivery to the customers.

### **2.2.3 Activity or facility**

Professional development is often referred to as the facility or activity organised to enhance educator development. Caena's (2011) appraisal of literature on the value in educators' ongoing professional development utilises the subsequent definition; professional development is established as linked with activities enhancing a person's knowledge, skills, ability, as well as additional features as an educator, apart from initial teacher training. In comparison, Creemers, Kyriakides and Antoniou (2013) note that 'professional development' is often utilised in a general logic, normally including every form of learning embarked on by educators apart from their preliminary teacher education. The challenge ensuing from the given meanings is their ambiguity in whether professional development denotes to a strategic learning undertaking (intervention, programme), the subsequent learning process, or the results of that learning course (development as outcome). Day's (2009) description of professional development articulates the nature of the course of ongoing educator learning as linked to the anticipated results as given below:

Professional development entails every regular learning involvement as well as activities that are consciously planned with an intent to be of primary or secondary advantage to a person, group or institute, which establish, by means of these, to the quality of learning in the institute. Professional development thus becomes a means through which, with others, educators appraise, refurbish and outspread their commitment as agents of change to the ethical drives of teaching; and by which they attain and cultivate critically the skills, knowledge as well as the emotional intelligence necessary to noble professional reasoning, preparation and practice with children, adolescents and co-workers during the course of each period of their teaching lives (Day, 2009, p. 22).

From the above conceptualisation, professional development can be described as a series of conscious and strategic activities that can be employed in municipal works within their respective departments to enhance their professional development and thus service and product delivery. Therefore, in this context, professional development is viewed as an activity that takes place within a formal or informal setting whereby employees are capacitated to produce the desired organisational outcomes. It is apparent that the existent literature vindicates the lived experiences of employees on professional development in a municipality. Based on the above definitions, training and development may be used to refer to professional development throughout this study.

### **2.3 Importance of professional development**

Research (Caena, 2011; Asghar & Ahmad, 2014; Chand, 2018) shows that South Africa as a country is still in a course of transformation. As such, professional development becomes vital, particularly for local governments such as municipalities. Transformation as presented by Taylor and Medina (2013), refers to the change in appearance or culture. Therefore, professional development programmes or strategies play a substantial role in every organisation. The programmes help the employees improve performance in the workplace, further updates their knowledge and improves individual skills (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Development programmes also help the employer make important decisions such as promoting the employee or rewarding in any other form. According to Bates and Davis (2010), effectiveness of training programmes is only possible when a learner employee is provided with enough time and support to apply the theory learnt into practice in the workplace. In support of this, Tan, Hall and Bryce (2003) believe that when organisations are providing training programmes to employees, they are making huge investments that will help meet the company's needs, as well as those of the employees.

Dessler (2008) postulates that training and development must consist of five steps, namely, needs analysis, instruction scheme, endorsement, execution, and evaluation. On the other hand, Cascio (2012) asserts that when considering training methods, it is vital to outline the basic principles of learning. Efficient and effective learning is promoted when learned skills and information are taken back to the workplace and training programmes integrate different ideologies of learning that have been developed. The Municipality is composed of employees or people who are from divergent experiences and need to be skilled to fill the gaps emanating from these experiences. Collins and Hussey (2009) posit that programmes are official attempts to assist employees acquire other skills, develop current skills and perform in the organisation. Therefore, training is necessary as employees' jobs keep on changing. Moreover, training and development ought to start when employees first join the organisation and must be ongoing for the course of their working career.

### **2.4 Legislative framework of professional development**

The current section offers a legal framework of professional development, training and development. It is imperative that workers and employers of the municipality are aware of the laws, regulations and other policies that are relevant to the professional development or training

and development, to appreciate their rights, accountabilities and prospects that are accessible. Pretorius, Klinck and Ngweni (2011) state that the purpose of all laws and policies is to expedite the advancement and enhancement of abilities and knowledge of the South African labour force. In South Africa, the government has launched new enterprises that raised the profile of training and development in the state, which involve the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) Act 58 of 1995, Skills Levies Act 9 of 1999, Skills Development Act 97 of 1998, and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998.

Griesel (2014) says that the progress of the country's economy is being prevented by employees who are semi-skilled or not adequately skilled. As a result, there was a need of ensuring that such gaps are closed. Through the Skills Development Act No 97 of 1998, South Africa offers guidance on the organisation, training and the importance of employee training.

The Act seeks to improve the abilities, services of the country's labour force, enhance the quality of the workforce's work life, and to further increase their efficiencies (insert SOURCE).

Cronje (2014) believes that this new strategic approach will help in linking the demands at the workplace more effectively. Sharing the same view, Engelbrecht (2017) says that skills development is the first and crucial step in making sure that professional development takes place, ensuring a solid foundation exists for all South Africans in terms of education and training. Professional Development is a fundamental element of any organisations' growth (National Skills Development Strategy 111, 2011- 2016). The shortage of skills has been identified as the greatest blockage of both public infrastructure and private investment programmes. Thus, a combined initiative to prioritise required skills will help. Thus, the government has made a commitment in form of a National Skills Act Strategy as a framework that will help in developing the skills of not only employees, but also the unemployed citizens, through projects that will be funded by the Sector Education Training Authority (SETA). Enhancing the competence of the workers is one means that professional development can generate a competitive advantage, but it is not the only way.

## **2.5 Professional development strategies and programmes offered in municipalities**

There are a substantial number of programmes and strategies used to develop employees professionally. These programmes can be categorised into several groups. These are the on-the-job training, off-the-job training, induction/orientation training, refresher training, and internship training (Bauer, 2010; DeCouze & Robbins, 2006; Juneja, 2018). According to Dessler (2008), training and development is having on-the-job, off-the-job, internship, lectures,



job instruction, job rotation, and orientation. Having assessed circumstances, establishing assessable and explicit objectives, in addition to bearing education ethics in mind, the design as well as the content of training programmes are to be selected. Training programme possibilities can be organised whether they concentrate on socialisation and orientation, administration training, or organisation progression.

### **2.5.1 On-the-Job Training**

On-the-job training is offered to staff at the place of work by their seniors and executives. As such, managers should constantly sit with their staff, train them on contemporary skill sets and technologies to support them in managing changes (Bauer, 2010). On-the-job training enables employees to be capable of handling bigger responsibilities (Asghar & Ahmad, 2014; Juneja, 2018). This strategy fits well in the current study where on-the-job training is currently being done and the perceptions in that regard are explored. It is acknowledged that some employees might not have the necessary skills due to changing technology and rotational job allocations within the department. On-the-Job training is taught by utilising a variety of training techniques. According to Juneja (2018), on-the-job-training includes Management Development, coaching and job rotation. These are discussed below.

#### **2.5.1.1 Management Development**

Managers and supervisors take responsibility in planning work to be performed by employees and ensure that they supervise the performance of their daily tasks as expected by the organisation (Heathfield, 2018; Milkovich, 2012). For these reasons, managers and supervisors should have obligatory knowledge and skills to empower them to accomplish their responsibilities efficiently. Milkovich (2012) asserts that, different from skills training, administration development usually concentrates on a lesser extent of definite skills, while the executive usually carries a larger obligation for individual development. A particular form of training for this cluster is management development training. Mumford (2010) and Milkovich (2012) further elaborate that such a form of training escalates success of the organisation, as managers' performance is enhanced owing to them being explicitly cognisant of the obligations as well as standardising amenable and assessable objectives.

Managers who exhibit potential are acknowledged and prepared for high-ranking posts. Through this form of training, organisations are offered enough personnel to succeed in executive posts. Nevertheless, this form of management training can occasionally be hazardous to organisations owing to non-executives not being introduced to this training. Hence, should

the non-managers be selected or elevated for an executive post, there is a possibility of having prolonged time before they cope with the demands of their new responsibilities. Moreover, this form of training is costly and in numerous organisations, it has been done at the expense of other workers through a selection of few (Chand, 2018). This strategy can be evoked to train the managers and supervisors on the job in readiness to take the responsibility of retraining the workers under their supervision in the municipal.

#### **2.5.1.2 Coaching**

Coaching can be referred to as learning by undertaking, as well as by handling different on-going projects. With this technique of training, the team manager assigns particular duties to team members, guards their performance, identifies their faults, offers them feedback and recommendations for improvement or perfection (Juneja, 2018; McCourt & Eldridge, 2013). So, team managers within their respective departments in the municipal can assign the duties to workers under them on the on-going projects, monitor their performance, correct them where necessary and give feedback and suggestions on possible improvements.

#### **2.5.1.3 Job Rotation**

The third approach is job rotation. This approach is a training whereby workers shift positions in the workplace, thus attaining new expertise and knowledge. Job rotation informs employees with different obligations and tasks and equips them with the skill to perform any task (Juneja, 2018; Kulkarniop, 2013; McCourt & Eldridge, 2013). Workers in their respective departments within the municipal are rotated to work in different sections to meet newer challenges to enhance their performance within various sections of the department.

### **2.5.2 Off-the-Job Training**

Off-the-job training is offered outside the organisation of concern. This training can be offered through several approaches. According to Juneja (2018), such approaches include Long-term Training or Professional Training, Lectures and Seminars/Workshops/Conferences, Simulation exercise, as well as Vestibule Training. These are discussed below.

#### **2.5.2.1 Long-term Training or Professional Training**

This is the management training strategy. Such forms of training are geared towards empowering generally young workers to obtain professional credentials such as Diplomas and Degrees. This training is usually offered through full time attendance of courses in institutions

of higher learning or colleges or on a part-time basis as well as through distance learning. Mensah and Jonathan (2016) argue that with the passage of time, young personnel will be helped to study their own vocation or line of work usually through block-release or day-release courses at indigenous technical institutions. Such training equips the workers with specialised credentials obtained with the jobs offered. Though this type of training aids organisations to acquire proficient personnel, misallocation or misplacement of some workers upon return can result in turn over owing to the fact that such employees can easily resign from the existing employer, which can result in non-effective training in the organisation (Phillips & Phillips, 2012). This approach can be beneficial to the current study by enabling more insights about views of municipal employees who, from time to time, are sent to institutions of higher learning to further their studies, and may, for instance, upgrade their diploma to a bachelor's degree and so forth.

#### **2.5.2.2 Lectures and Seminars/Workshops/Conferences**

Another way that several organisations train their workforce or employees is through lectures, seminars, workshops or conferences. This is a quick and simple manner of imparting knowledge in an enormous group of workers (Dessler, 2005). This implies that there should be a teacher or an instructor who addresses a team of workers in the same room, which happens in circumstances where there is necessity for workers to learn more about a new service or product. The teacher or instructor could be from the organisation or a third party from outside the organisation.

Conferences and seminars are operative when training must be offered to a huge audience. Modern technologies, relevant information, most recent developments, and case studies are talked over on a mutual platform to familiarise workers with new skill sets (Juneja, 2018). These can be used to impart skill to deal with a recent technology on the market or upgrade in the system within the respective department in the municipal. This will serve to keep the municipal workers coordinated with the world in terms of the technological advancements of the system, as well as each new financial system in the finance department.

#### **2.5.2.3 Simulation exercise**

Simulation exercises train the workers in a simulated environment which bears a resemblance to the workers' real working setting (Juneja, 2018; Reznikova, 2010). These simulation exercises can be employed to train the municipal workers to assess their readiness to work with

real systems. For instance, the traffic control within the city of sewerage systems can be simulated prior to practical implementation.

#### **2.5.2.4 Vestibule Training**

In vestibule training, workers exercise work on the equipment or instrument which they would be utilising in future when they would be doing the actual work (Chand, 2018; Juneja, 2018).

#### **2.5.3 Induction or Orientation training**

Newly employed workers are novel to the operations of the organisation they have become part of, and this includes old organisational members. Orientation is a planned undertaking by the administration to familiarise workers with their new job (Halim & Ali, 2008). Other scholars such as Bauer (2010) and Yoder (2012) maintain that induction programmes are intended to familiarise new workers with their trades; to make known to new entrants their fellow work mates; and to connect the work of the novice to that of the organisation as a whole. This will be pivotal to municipal employees who are new. They too, are oriented to various works within their respective departments to familiarise them with the required technical knowhow to carry out their duties. It is interesting to understand how they perceive this approach to be in terms of their own professional development.

#### **2.5.4 Refresher training**

At the phase of opening nomination of the workforces, they are formally trained for their trades (Bates & Davis, 2010). However, as time goes on, they may fail to recall some of the techniques taught to them and consequently turn out to be non-operational due to technological advancement, as well as enhanced methods of managing production. Therefore, refresher training is organised for current workers to offer them a chance to recover and develop their knowledge. Juneja (2018) and Yoder (2012) contend that refresher training programmes are planned to circumvent personnel obsolescence. Refresher training will be majorly employed to enhance the development of old municipal staff to bring them to speed with current technological changes and system improvements.

#### **2.5.5 Internship training**

Internship training initiatives have come to be prevalent nowadays due to collaboration between vocational institutes and employers (Chand, 2018). With this form of training, vocational organisations get into an agreement with a commercial enterprise to offer technical

knowledge to its learners. Internship training is often intended for vocations where advanced theoretical knowledge is to be supported by technical knowledge on the work. For example, engineering learners are referred to huge manufacturing enterprises to attain technical occupational experience. Similarly, medical students are referred to huge hospitals to acquire applied knowledge (Kumar, 2010; Surbhi, 2015). This method is the oldest and one of the most regularly utilised if the training is reasonable for an extended period (Chand, 2018). At this point, the main part of training is done on the occupation's productive work as every intern is offered a programme of tasks in accordance to a pre-determined plan. Several organisations have embraced an apprenticeship method to training, which entails offering workers a chance to understand and also detect problems; thus, offering effective and efficient solutions for the challenges (Kumar, 2010). This approach may be used to train the municipal staff where they can be sent to the vendor or a company with the same technological applications to gain more insight on enhancing the handling of their duties. Therefore, training is required as employees' jobs keep on changing. Drawing from the discussion above, it can be argued that training and development ought to also start when employees first join the organisation and must continue throughout their working career.

## **2.6 Effective professional development**

Training goes beyond building knowledge and skills for each team member for their own individual advantage. As given by Kelly (2011), organisations have capitalised on a training account for subsequent paybacks. Firstly, enhanced recruitment in the present day also entails understanding that employment candidates are searching for a work atmosphere that nurtures progress as well as development (Chand, 2018). For several employment seekers, training in every sense is crucial just as the compensation package. An operational training programme permits one to cast a broader net by contracting individuals who have the right assertiveness and progressing skills as time goes on (Chand, 2018). Subsequently, for higher retention, when individual employees are aware that an organisation takes interest in their own progress, they have a likelihood of staying with that organisation for an extended time (insert SOURCE). Finally, better output means the poorer the turnover rate, the further passionate, motivated and productive one's labour force is going to be. As a result, workers will put together their newly acquired skills, knowledge and every work they plan and generate.

As noted by Guzzo, Jette and Katzel (2015), when training is complete it leads to consistency in and stronger productivity. In addition, Locke and Lathan (2012) assert that the method that

has proved to have a significant impact on performance is goal setting. However, not all training is created in the same way as it will influence the behaviour and performance change. The way it is designed and delivered will provide better effect and profit. There are features or characteristics that have been associated with effective professional development for employees. Surface (2012) contends that for professional development to be effective, training needs assessment should be conducted first, where it will be clear to identify the type of training required and the tasks or skills that need improvement, as well as how training will be supported and aligned with the strategic goals of the organisation. Similarly, Knollies (2015) says training should be made personal so that it allows the organisation to get information to be able to cater for their individual needs. According to Knowles (2013), employees or adults want to know why they need to be involved in learning before they get involved; therefore, the employer needs to help the employee in identifying the needs.

Noe (2008) further argues that for professional development to be adequate, the purpose, objectives and the outcome must be identified and be communicated to the affected employees. Identification is done based on the results of the training assessment conducted. Consequently, the results should be communicated to the affected employees. Knollies (2015) believes that employees should be allowed to share and comment on different information received and their experiences to solve any problems. Knowles (2013) further argues that adults believe that they oversee their own lives, expect to be treated as such and be seen as capable individuals. When learning or training occurs, adults come with their different experiences, further bringing individual backgrounds, learning styles, motivators, needs, interests and goals, which require learning to be individualised.

According to Noe and Colquitt (2002), relevant content also contributes to the effectiveness of training as it should link directly with the employees' job experience. These scholars further argue that active demonstration by the facilitators should be linked to the specific skills, and regular feedback should be provided both during practice and when the training has been completed. Knowles (2013) says that adults only become ready to learn if what they are being taught will be applied in their current jobs or situations. Moreover, they would want to learn something that will help them perform their tasks better and be able to solve problems encountered in their working environment.

According to Arthur, Bennett, Edens, and Bells (2013), employees should be further given opportunities to perform all the new skills that have been learned, because if this is not done,

training will not have any impact and it would be time wasted. Knollies (2015) further asserts that learners should be given an opportunity to work together in teams as this helps enhance the training provided. Knollies (2015) further argues that training should always be incorporated with the different areas of knowledge, not only the experience and the employee's expertise. Knowles (2013) highlights that employees become responsive to the external motivators (like higher salaries or better jobs), but most importantly, the internal motivators (like self-esteem) which helps employees to understand how they can do their jobs better and get recognition. The discussion above is relevant for this study and provides insights about what makes workers want to stay in an organisation. It also informs on what managers in organisations can do to ensure that professional development programmes made available to employees are effective in terms of providing support that will facilitate the achievement of organisational goals.

## **2.7 Employees' experiences regarding professional development.**

According to a study by Kidunda (2009), at the National Society Security Fund (NSSF), training was done randomly and had no clear training programmes. The foresaid scholar further states that there were many misconceptions from employees about the objective of training and individual perceptions. Employees from NSSF mentioned that overseas training was most preferred as a way of getting more money. Other employees said they preferred training so that they could be promoted.

Another research done by Salum (2010) at Tanzania Posts Corporation (TPC) revealed that the benchmarks utilised in identifying employees for training was the introductions of new products or facilities, establishment of new amenities or machinery, a disparity concerning performances of workers compared to the obligatory outputs, and self-sponsorships. According to the study by Salum (2010), only 88% of employees went for training as recommended by their respective supervisors. The training at TPC was however discovered not to be transparent and employees complained and asked about the criteria used in choosing employees for training. The scholar further revealed that there was no formal valuation done at TPC to assess training attainment and impact on the performance of the employees. One can draw lessons from this study about attitudes of employees when there is lack of transparency in the identification process of employees for further training.

Mchanakutwa (2009) did a study at the Tanzania Electricity Supply Company (TANESCO) and discovered that the company did not follow their training policy. Employees were sent to

training without the needs having been identified, which resulted in TANESCO obtaining an excess of employees trained or developed in other units, as well as skills devoid of corresponding work. These findings reveal that such practices resulted in employees resigning from the company.

A different study conducted at the Tanzania's Ministry of Health (MoH) by Hamis (2013) discovered that training at the Ministry was not operational due to the government failing to provide enough budget for training resolution. Furthermore, the training programmes were not executed, no proper evaluation was conducted to measure training done and acquired, and there was no translation of training to work performance. There were other factors that contributed to the challenges, like the concept of training was not understood by the employees in the organisation.

Another study conducted by Mkawe (2013), which was done at Kibaha Education Centre (KEC), showed that though the Centre allotted resources for learning, it barely exhausted 50% of the budget to be utilised in relation to training. The finances allotted for training at KEC were transferred to other functions at the close of the fiscal year. Moreover, the study reported that the Centre had no proficient training personnel to appropriately organise training undertakings. As such, a challenge of trainability of employed workforce existed and the incentive arrangement to maintain a competent workforce was insufficient. From the research, it was established that KEC did not take the training of personnel seriously. Thus, if the municipal must gain from training of its workers, the observations above need to be investigated. These findings provide learning opportunities for the municipalities in terms of the need for clear training policies and programmes with clear objectives, including budgetary allocation and the availability of competent managers to carry out the training process.

## **2.8 Challenges experienced by employees in professional development provision**

A focused professional development initiative is principally relevant in the current contemporary world filled with constant change, where skills and knowledge easily become outdated and not explicit; hence, vocations will be required by companies in the subsequent coming years (Coetzee, 2013). Therefore, a more detailed analysis of the matter helps to ascertain a score of both conscious and unconscious problematic issues to professional development emanating from government policies, employees and management (Ratcliffe, 2013; Trapiello, 2018). Recognising such issues, addressing them and coming up with suitable solutions is one way of enhancing the likelihood of achievement at two stages: a) in the



meaning of more influential strategies for professional development; and b) in terms of noble implementation to activate the anticipated progress (CEDEFOP, 2012; Trapiello, 2018 ).

### **2.8.1 Changes in government policies**

Justification for constant training modifications in government legislations and policies have paved way for professional training. Such changes in policy may point to responsibilities to be executed by an individual who possesses specific knowledge (CEDEFOP, 2012). For instance, in Tanzania credentials for nomination and elevation in the civic sector are explicitly postulated in the Public Service Scheme (2003) in Section 31. This is where amongst the prerequisites is an educational credential safeguarded by educational level obligatory for the post or rank of interest. This has currently been stretched to individuals competing for political positions; for instance, members of Parliament. Particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, the Public Service Regulations (2001) report specifies that the effecting power shall govern the composite requirements. Thus, depending on the minimum requirements needed can affect professional development and might need a raft of changes to address the requirements stipulated by the respective authorities.

### **2.8.2 Globalisation**

Globalisation infers more communications, interdependence and interactions between nations and communities, creating the contemporary world community (Jolly, Emmerij & Weiss, 2009). This infers that customs are not national anymore, but intercontinental and universal, both in use and scope. Globalisation and transnational relations imply that activities, events, decision policies, economics or culture in one portion of the globe have effects on everyone and no political immunity from their effects. As provided by the United Nations conference 2003 (UN, 2003) on business and development, globalisation infers the augment of arrival of resources as well as products transversely in state boundaries and presents a set of organisational arrangement to manage global fiscal activities. The flow of resources does not only include services and products, but also foreign direct investments and technology transfers, especially by transnational enterprises (Wade, 2014).

Quick progressions in technology and globalisation have resulted in work being done dynamically. Progress has compelled training to be an ongoing organisational undertaking to equip workers with skills to handle technological modifications and globalisation. Torrington and Chapman (2018) elucidate that training has had considerate attention in the past few years

due to fast technological developments that have taken out of the picture unskilful jobs, paving way for jobs that demand knowledge about contemporary technology. Globalisation comes with technological advancements; therefore, municipal workers need to be retrained and brought to par with other global cities.

### **2.8.3 Organisational factors influencing and affecting training**

Organisational elements that influence training can be internally or externally originated. For training and development to be successful, full backing from the executive is a prerequisite. Top management ought to communicate with their employees concerning training prospects (transparency). In addition, the management ought to be engaged and should devote resources towards training (Monappa & Saiyadain, 2006). Harrison (2008) proposes several factors which include organisational environment, organisational goals and tasks, organisational structure, workforce, commitment to training, evaluation of training, training proficiency and interactions. These are briefly discussed:

Organisational environment: The first factor is organisational environment, of which threats and challenges, the constraints and opportunities that overwhelm the organisation within the modern economic environment have an influence on training for the continued existence of the concerned organisation (Harrison, 2008). In addition, the political environment has a possibility of pressurising training through government policies (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Phillips & Phillips, 2012).

Organisational goals and tasks: tasks and goals for the organisation and its degree of success are critical determining factors of training needs and undertakings (Harrison, 2008). Therefore, this factor implies that if the organisation like the municipality is competing in an international market to attract tourism, investments and many other factors, it will be forced to train their staff to international standards to compete with other cities around the world.

Organisational structure: One of the imperative factors for training is a flexible organisational structure as it enables employments to be designed as well as re-designed to facilitate work-based training and give room for sharing as well as reflection during training (Harrison, 2008). However, if the structure of the organisation is too rigid to enable training, it stands to be a hindering factor. Therefore, the structure of an organisation has a bearing on training (Chand, 2012; Galagan, 2014). For instance, innovative and flexible structures will have a preference

in training to deal with changes. In addition, the structure has a bearing on the existence and duties of the staffs' function.

The workforce: The workforce's size, behavioural pattern, occupational structure, performance, as well as learning needs all have a bearing on training. Concerning beliefs and attitude, it is argued that in the case of attitudes being positive, the investment in training can be intense (Galagan, 2014). In the case that attitudes and beliefs concerning training are negative, training will adversely impact an organisation.

Commitment to training: The degree of devotedness of employees at distinct levels in relation to training, as well as individual views of line managers and the executive on training matters, also has an influence on training in an organisation (Turner & Fletcher, 2006).

Evaluation of training intends to realise the significance of training conducted. Harrison (2008), indicates that though a number of managers conveyed themselves contented with the training programme in the organisation, a number of them had no substantial knowledge of the exact training being conducted; neither cost of the training nor the results, or benefits of the training were apparent to them. Furthermore, personnel did not take an active role in offering such information, neither did they perceive the need for doing so. Accordingly, the above situations have a possibility of affecting the training operation in an organisation.

Training proficiency and interactions: Harrison (2008) states that an individual accountable for training is expected to have continuous communication with other employees in an organisation to ascertain their perceptions on training needs and activities. If a manager has little skill or is unskilled at all, he or she has limited opportunity to enhance the role training plays in the concerned organisation. The manager might realise that continued failure to take advantage of chances and demonstrate the significance of training may lessen the role training plays in that organisation (George, 2008).

#### **2.8.4 Economic factors affecting training**

Enough monetary means in the organisations sustain training (Roux, 2011). Nevertheless, inadequate financial resources in the form of investment in the development of human resources function and departmental costs impede training in the organisation (Sambrook, 2002). Several organisations view training as an expense instead of an investment in human resources. For instance, Harrison (2008) argues that training is threatened and deprived of

resources in many organisations today. This is particularly a challenge when inadequate budgets are allocated to training and therefore to professional development.

### **2.8.5 Other factors influencing and affecting training**

Training of workers in general has other factors that influence it. These factors can be at the individual level as well as the organisational level (Sambrook, 2002). These range from resources for training, the organisation of the occupation, to motivation. For example, Sambrook (2002) proposes that professional development in the workplace is driven by several factors, which can either be positive or negative. These factors include motivation to training, clarity, a learning culture and resources. These are discussed below:

Motivation to training: Sambrook (2002) highlights that a discrepancy can arise in the absence of inspiration on the managers' part for backing workers, training, and an absence of inspiration for training or logic for accountability for their personal development as workers. The less engagement of executives and the workforces are connected to their lack of motivation for training (Clark *et al.*, 1993; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). This will be a challenge as training is one of the key aspects of professional development, and it is expected that workers must be motivated to do training.

Clarity: Absence of clarity is another negative factor, and it involves both the shifting function of human resource development professionals, and innovative line of attack to working (Sambrook, 2002). The lack of clarity encompasses no understanding concerning human resource development goals, objectives, duties, tasks and can include detachment between executives and the human resource development role (Susomrith & Coetzer, 2013). One more reason is the absence of technical information concerning the necessity for training, training opportunities and training progress. Additional aspects are vague communications, implicit training policy, systems or procedures and a broadly shared understanding of the significance of training, as well as individual development (Gautam, 2013). If such issues are made clear, they turn back training in the organisation. Without clarity, municipal workers might not know the available opportunities and what is needed of them. Thus, this will hinder their professional development.

A Learning Culture: According to Sambrook (2002), lack of a learning culture is one aspect that can impede training. Without a learning culture it becomes intensely hard to stimulate the workforce to share information or participate in a learning practice if they are not familiar with it or possibly even hesitant to do so. Nevertheless, if a culture of learning exists in an

organisation, it will be with ease to modify human resource and development activities, for instance creating responsibilities to both employees and managers, and making room for learning as part of occupation activities (Mohamed, 2013). This will affect professional development in the case of mentoring or on job training which will in turn inhibit professional development.

Resources: Time, human resources and financial resources are factors discussed in this section. Inadequate time to come up with new human resource development plans or programmes, lack of time to show up for training on the workers' side owing to work stress, and rescheduling or cancellation of training prospects on management's part to make sure that the work load is accomplished are factors that impede training (Osei, 2006). Inadequate financial funds, type of capitalisation in the human resource development operation and departmental costs likewise impede training (Dawha, 2009). Imperatively, enough human resource development means human, financial and time resources have a critical function in seconding training to workers (Mohamed, 2013). Without proper financial resources, relevant and skilled managerial human resources and sufficient time, it is impossible to train the municipal workers and this can impact negatively on their professional development.

## **2.9 Implementing the training programme**

Regardless of the significance of the needs-analysis, principles of learning, instructional objectives among others, choices concerning instructional techniques are where the rubber meets the road (Surbhi, 2015). One of the concerns in selecting different training techniques is establishing the best technique suitable for the attitudes, skills and knowledge to be acquired. For instance, if the learning material is generally factual, techniques like encoded teaching, classroom or lecture might be appropriate (Susomrith, & Coetzer, 2013). Nonetheless, once the training encompasses a huge behavioural element, supplementary techniques like simulation, on-the-job training, or computer-based training may work better (Belcout *et al.*, 2008). When explaining his six reasons on challenges facing provision of training or professional development to employees, Bryant (2009) indicated that all are intuitively aware that learning and development offered in the workplace is expected to change things. Nevertheless, the programmes (not essentially individuals) mostly fail owing to reasons, of which some are structural, but generally just poor project management.

The chief reason for courses and programmes failing is lack of accountability (Dumler, 2018). Departments responsible for learning and development are inclined to link

accountability and the number of attendances (Engelbrecht, 2017). However, the failure to be accountable is in the connection of the programme to the employee's position or job (Kopp, 2006; Longenecker, 2004). Most programmes lack any form of "Monitoring", which goes beyond observing the learner attending the programme and conducting some exercise, but involve vigorous effort that is time demanding and costly. Monitoring is not an individual responsibility as it encompasses the student (employee), the immediate supervisor and the human resources department (Dumler, 2018). This is not an easy task, but the outcome can be worth it. Implementation is another area which poses a challenge in most programmes. Human resources departments develop inclusive programmes that are unrealistic to finish or accomplish (Engelbrecht, 2017). The aim of the programme formation and its accomplishment is to cut the period that it takes for a worker with partial knowledge to grow into a fully operative member of the concerned organisation (Nielson, 2018).

Furthermore, trainings fail because they may result in employees losing focus and effectiveness (Juneja, 2018). Learning paths, programmes and courses require great organisation delivered in an expressive manner and sustained over a reasonable period. A lot of courses compress much information within a short period (Khan, 2011). Scholars such as Dumler (2018) and Nielson (2018) argues that it is catastrophic to subject employees to nine-hour programmes for consecutive days. Their view is that learning levels decrease so rapidly in the late period such that they end up being useless and frequent days of long learning hours make a number of programmes ineffective for both the learners, as well as reducing the energy level of the trainer (Dumler, 2018; Nielson, 2018). Another view expressed by the two scholars is the need for organisations to provide programmes that have a positive impact on the employees. The programmes provided ought to meet this basic criterion at the development stage (McKenna, 2017; Nielson, 2018).

In addition, one issue is the 'what then' part of most programmes. Phillip and Phillip (2012) argue that programme managers, stakeholders and line managers usually have a 'what then' methodology to commercial training. Such stakeholders have the knowledge for the need of programmes but lack direction on how to promote the programmes that their workforce attends. After the workforce undertakes the introductory programmes, the question is where will they further go to develop additional significant skills in different fields? Preferably, every training programme ought to be entirely in conjunction with the company objectives (Phillips & Phillips, 2012). This alignment and high connection deliver the major return on company

training, safeguarding that which has significance, value and usefulness to both the worker, and the company (Phillips & Phillips, 2012).

By offering and creating programmes that not merely back the organisation's objectives, but create advanced skills with the organisation's workforce, most corporations and their personnel will realise much return on both the individual and organisational investments (Kumar, 2011). Circumventing these issues merely makes most programmes improved and more valuable (Nielson, 2018). Offering and creating programmes that back the organisational objectives, as well as persisting with these programmes by employing advanced skills with the organisation's workforce will go a long way in improving their professional development and service delivery to the municipal.

## **2.10 Theoretical Framework underpinning professional development**

There are numerous models that exist on professional development used in professions such as teaching, medicine, and allied professions. Professional development can be arranged in diverse ways and for assorted reasons. It is imperative for managers to possess relevant attitudes, skills and knowledge to motivate the workforce; for instance, to motivate employees to be engaged in development initiatives in the current study. Nel, Gerber, Van-Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono and Werner (2010) note that workers that willingly go an extra mile in their work are inspired or motivated. It is emphasised by Condrey (2010) that motivation entails activities that are voluntarily initiated by a person on his own. Thus, motivation can be when a person aims to accomplish beyond what is expected of them. According to Nel *et al.* (2004), the fact that employees have different things that motivate them in an analogous way or all at once, it becomes imperative for executives to be cognizant of the various motivational models in human resource development. Nel *et al.* (2004) stress that the models of motivation centre on the aspects that motivate human behaviour as well as theories that impact the fortitude of such behaviour.

Dena and Patsy (2003) designed a model of effective training with four major criteria:

- **Effective training is learner focused:** it identifies and addresses issues important to the learner, while building on learner strengths. It includes opportunities for active participation by the learner, while recognising and drawing on the knowledge and experience of the learner. Learning is facilitated through peer exchange and is

culturally, as well as ethnically meaningful. All participants are drawn into the discussion.

- **Effective training demonstrates productive behaviour and effective life skills:** Effective training integrates decision-making, planning, organisation and implementation skill building. It models and reinforces workplace ethics and productive use of time. Local and community resources are an integral part of the learning environment. Opportunities for learners to expand social networks are provided. Learners are challenged to take responsibility for their own lifelong learning.
- **Effective training inspires and motivates:** Effective training increases the learners' knowledge about the subject matter and reinforces worthwhile values and principles. It provides opportunities for humour and fun during learning, while maintaining a positive focus. Learners leave the session with a feeling of accomplishment.
- **Effective training celebrates personal and group achievements:** Incentives to mark learning milestones are incorporated into effective training. On-going assessment and learner-based feedback is critical to the success of any training session. Learners are acknowledged and recognised for their contributions by the larger community. Opportunities to include children and other household members in the learning process are also made available. Community leaders who can bring other resources to bear on the issue at hand are included as an integral part of the learning process. (Dena & Patsy, 2003)

Therefore, it can be argued that if municipalities consider the abovementioned criteria, the training and development of employees can be realised. This means that whatever professional development initiative is taken by a municipality, it should be focused on the employees' needs as proposed by the model, that training should be learner-focused. Thus, the ability to focus on the employees' needs ensures relevance of the training. If this aspect is properly done, it can result in productive behaviour as well as being inspirational and motivational to the employees. It can be argued that the model speaks to development, since for an individual to be motivated, the training offered should be relevant. Also, one can argue that if the training focuses on employees and results in productive behaviour among employees that are motivated in undertaking professional development, it consequently brings about personal and group achievements. Ultimately, employees in municipalities can be motivated with productive behaviour resulting in realising the municipality's goal.



## **2.11 Conclusion**

Several issues entailing professional development have been reviewed in this chapter. Of importance are the strategies in professional development and the challenges thereof in actualising professional development. Two theories were found to be suitable for the provision of insight on professional development and the purpose of undertaking such. Therefore, the two theories were used in combination to ensure success in the implementation of professional development for municipal employees. The next chapter discusses the methodological procedures of the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter of this study reviewed the relevant literature on various aspects of professional development. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodological procedures used in this study. The chapter explores eight important aspects including the paradigm, research design, research methodology, research sampling, research instrument, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical issues, limitation of the study and the conclusion.

#### **3.2 Research paradigm**

Since the current study sought to understand the experiences of eThekweni Municipality's employees in relation to the support they receive in terms of professional development, the study utilised the constructive/interpretive paradigm. According to Christiansen, Bertram and Land (2010), a paradigm is the entire system of a researcher's thinking and insight to systematically observe things and any social reality based on certain basic assumptions. The aforementioned scholars claim that paradigms explain what is acceptable to be researched; how a researcher sees things that will influence his or her research; and describe how people make sense of the world about their actions. It guides the researcher's conduct and behaviour to generate relevant answers from the participants (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Again, the research paradigm describes how a researcher perceives processes, choices and knowledge construction (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2001).

The study therefore employed a constructive/interpretive paradigm. As stated by Guba and Lincoln (1994), constructive/interpretive ontology is native as well as precise. Guba and Lincoln (1994) further emphasise that no single reality exists as there are many realities built on social and personal involvements. The epistemology of the constructive/interpretive paradigm is subjective and transactional. In this understanding, the researcher was not discovering "truth" but constructing it with the study subjects. Hence, the approach of this paradigm is an unceasing manner of realising 'truth' by conversation. Comprehending 'truth' happens by means of communication between the researcher and the participants where every intercourse is shaped upon prior intercourse to reach an agreement about 'truth'. By using the constructive paradigm, the researcher viewed the experiences of eThekweni Municipality's employees in relation to the support they receive from the Municipality in terms of professional development. Their accounts helped to appreciate their lived experiences in the

workplace, created by dialogues and interactions. Hence, in trying to understand the realities surrounding the professional development experiences of eThekweni Municipality's employees, a phenomenological research was adapted.

Taylor and Medina (2013) claim that no research paradigm is better than the other, since all have their specific purposes of generating unique information about the phenomena being studied. It is important therefore for the researcher to consider that knowing all the paradigms is important and it remains a mental resource in research (Seale, 1999). In this study, I intended to understand the experiences of the employees on professional development and the challenges they face, and to look at how professional development can be enhanced. The study therefore used the constructive paradigm.

### **3.2.1 The use of a constructive/interpretive paradigm in this Study**

According to Christiansen *et al.* (2010), the advantage of using a constructive/interpretive paradigm is that it helps define the way in which individuals make sense of their world, and the way they make sense of their certain actions or reactions. This means that by making use of a constructive/interpretive paradigm, the researcher does not want to predict what the participants will do or react. Moreover, this paradigm is useful to explore and provide rich and in-depth exploration about the phenomena being studied (Creswell *et al.*, 2010). However, the use of a constructive/interpretive paradigm can have some disadvantages and challenges. Creswell *et al.* (2010) assert that a constructive/interpretive paradigm sometimes does not generalise findings beyond the phenomena of study. The main reason for selecting a constructive/interpretive paradigm for this study was to allow employees to share their views to provide a better comprehension of their experiences in professional development. According to Creswell *et al.* (2012, p. 245), the constructive/interpretive paradigm is used to “understand people’s experiences and how they construct the social world” by interacting with each other through learning. They further add that using the constructive/interpretivist approach provides an opportunity for the researcher to deeply explore the phenomenon in order to generate reliable descriptions about a research.

### **3.3 Research design**

The current study is a qualitative research. Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook (1965) state that a research design can be defined as a planned basis for action that acts as a conduit connecting the research questions to the execution of the actual study. Therefore, a research

designs can be said to be a planning that directs the preparation of circumstances for gathering and scrutiny of data in a way that intends to put together applicability to the study's aim with a budget in process (Asghar & Ahmad, 2014). A detailed description of research design is offered by Page and Meyer (2000) who define it as a disposition which the investigator makes use of to get participants and gather data with the intention of reaching conclusions concerning the research issue. Therefore, a research design chosen ought to be able to address the research questions.

In every research, two chief research approaches are of prominence; these include qualitative and quantitative approach. For the aim of the current study, the qualitative approach was utilised. Firstly, to gain a comprehensive understanding of experiences on professional development from employees, qualitative data were gathered by means of semi-structured questions utilising the interview guide. In qualitative research, the research approach especially, data generation is primarily conversational and not numerical (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Neuman, 2000; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The reason for selecting a qualitative research design in this study was to capture the understanding of a social phenomenon from the participants' perspectives on their experiences on professional development (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Detailed and credible data rich in meaning was generated, allowing the employees to describe their own experiences and perceptions on professional development (Angen, 2000; Babbie, 2011). Feuer, Towne and Shavelson (2002) claim that a qualitative research approach is considered relevant to the study if a researcher wants to adequately capture the complexities regarding participants' experiences through their own words.

Creswell *et al.* (2010) claim that the six different types of research design are the: case studies, conceptual studies which critically analyse literature available on the phenomena being studied; historical studies (based on historic research designs); action research whereby a researcher assists the participants to find a solution to a problem; ethnographic studies which are used in social systems and cultural heritage; and grounded theory which seeks to develop theory on the data generated.

### **3.4 Research methodology**

Methodology refers to the theoretical analysis of the methods appropriate to a field of study or to the body of methods and principles particular to a branch of knowledge (Blackstone, 2016). The study specifically utilised a case study methodology. Key (2013) posits that a

qualitative case study provides deep investigations about people, groups and institutions with the aim of understanding the case in its complexity and entirety. Key (2013) adds that it is used when the researcher wants to analyse factors that are relevant to the subject under study. It involves an in-depth description and longitudinal examination of an event (Davey, 2011; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2001). McLeod (2008) and McMillan and Schumacher (2006) add that the in-depth investigation can be of a single person, groups or communities. The aforementioned scholars contend that a case study is a systematic way of looking at what is happening, generating data, analysing data, and reporting the findings.

According to Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006), the researcher should allow innovative ideas to emerge from careful and detailed participation in the study. Therefore, in this study an intensive investigation was conducted to provide rich information about the experiences of selected employees to generate information in order to determine what views they held regarding professional development. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) state that researchers use a qualitative case study to determine whether one intervention has any effect upon a group or subjects. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) further claim that using a qualitative case study allows the researcher to select methods of data generation and an analysing approach that generates material suitable for case studies, and that data can be analysed using different theories. For this study, a case study was used as it allowed the selection of different data generation methods. According to Yin (2009), the 'six sources of evidence' in a case study are documents, archival records, interviews, direct participants' observation, and physical artefacts. In this study when generating data, semi-structured interviews were used.

### **3.5 Research Sampling**

Sampling is defined by many social scientists as that part of statistical practice concerned with the selection of individual observation intended to yield some knowledge about a population especially for the purpose of statistical inference (insert SOURCE). There are two main sampling approaches, namely probability and non-probability sampling (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Probability sampling is usually used in quantitative research where generalisation of findings is the goal (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). However, in studies such as this one, where findings are not intended to be generalised, non-probability sampling is appropriate. Therefore, a non-probability sampling termed purposive or judgmental sampling was utilised to select the participants. Trochim and Donnelly (2006) argue that sampling is the process of selecting units for example individuals, organisations, from a

population of interest so that by studying the sample the researcher may fairly generalise his/her results back to the population from which they were chosen. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the study participants. Purposive sampling (known also as selective, subjective, or judgment sampling) is a sampling method in which researchers attempt to attain a sample that acts as a representative of the population (Cole, 2016). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique and it happens when elements chosen for the sample are selected by the researcher's judgement. Usually researchers believe that they can attain a representative sample by means of a sound judgment, which will consequently save money as well as time (Dane, 2011). To come up with a purposive sample, the researcher starts with precise perceptions in mind wished to be examined and then searches for the study participants who cover that full range of perceptions. In this case, the eThekweni employees were the selected participants who had experience related to the provision of professional development by the Municipality.

The advantages of using purposive sampling was that it was the only feasible sampling technique in gaining information from a very particular group of individuals, that is, municipality employees that had experience of professional development. Since the most suitable individuals for the study were selected, this process became less time consuming as well as cost effective. The sample was selected in four research regions of the Municipality (South, North, Central and West Regions). The employees selected constituted of 1 Senior Manager from Human Resources, 3 Training Administrators, 1 Senior Clerk from Management Services, 1 Pay Roll Administrator from Human Resources, 3 Project Officers from eThekweni Municipal Academy, 1 Finance Administrator, 1 Administrator and 1 Skills Development Practitioner. The participants' race and gender were considered to balance the data. A sample size of 12 employees from the municipality was selected from the four different regions in the Municipality.

### **3.6 Data generation methods**

As stated by Bernard, Wutich and Ryan (2016), the main categories of data generation methods about what humans think and how they behave are elicitation, experiments, direct and indirect observation. Experiments differ from other methods in that the researcher intentionally controls the subject before observing results. The present study employed elicitation using semi-structured interviews.

Data was generated from the eThekweni Municipality's four regions (South North, Central, and West regions) by engaging the employees in a dialogue. The relationship between the qualitative researcher and participants allowed the conversations to flow smoothly. A relationship of trust was built with the participants as ethical issues were explained, which included confidentiality, anonymity and withdrawal from the study. This created rapport between the participants and the researcher.

### **3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit information from the study participants. Semi-structured interviews take place between two or more people, where the interviewer attempts to obtain data by asking questions. The researcher can prepare a list of predetermined questions so that the conversation is clear and explores issues of importance (Kumar, 2014). In semi-structured interviews, similar questions are utilised which have been set prior to the interview. Semi-structured interviews allow flexibility in that the interviewer can adjust the sequence of how topics are covered (Bernard *et al.*, 2016). These authors further suggest that probing is strategic to effective in-depth interviewing.

Twelve employees were interviewed in face-to-face interviews; this is one-on-one communication. It was envisaged that the study yielded authentic results based on the employees' work experiences in relation to professional development. This was because it was unlikely for a question to be misunderstood in a face-to-face interview, meaning if the question was not clear it could be restructured in a manner that was understood by the participant, thus giving clear answers (Kumar, 2011). This kind of interview focused on an individual who possessed special knowledge and was willing to share it with the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Interviews are mostly used and are a useful method when generating data. Semi-structure interviews were chosen because they allowed a follow-up and probing, as well as clarifying some questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

An interview guide was used for conducting semi-structured interviews. Other researchers call interview guide, interview schedule. An interview guide (schedule) is defined as printed sets of field questions which the researcher uses to interview the participants throughout the entire process of the interview (insert SOURCE). The interview guide used in this study consisted of biographical information of participants and the questions on the participants' experiences with regards to professional development; the current challenges and how the professional development could be enhanced. The questions in the interview schedule were guided by the

objectives of the study. Questions can either be open-ended or close-ended. Open-ended and close-ended questions differ in characteristics especially with regards to the role and the position of the participant when answering the questions. Close-ended questions limit the participant's responses to the offered set of alternatives, while open-ended questions allow the participants to express their opinions without limits and /or the influence of the researcher (Foddy, 1993).

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Thematic analysis was used in analysing the data generated, which is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 59), not only does it describe or organise data, but it also “interprets a range of aspects of the research topic”. The six steps prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to carry out a thematic analysis are guidelines and were not used as prescriptive, linear, and inflexible rules when analysing data in this study. In line with that, the following six steps were adopted in this study: familiarising oneself with the data; generating initial codes; search for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and finally producing the report.

Analysing data becomes critical and should be carefully considered when designing a study since the aim of data analysis is to transform information (data) into an answer to the critical research question(s) (insert SOURCE). A careful consideration of data analysis strategies ensures that the design is coherent as the researcher matches the analysis to a particular data to the purposes of the research and to the research paradigm. Data analysis procedures can be divided into quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative techniques employ a variety of statistical analysis to make sense of the data; however, since this study is qualitative it was vital that techniques used began by identifying themes in the data and relationships between themes (Terre-Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). It was important to ensure that the type of data analysis employed matches the research paradigm and data, as well as answer the critical research questions of the study.

The data generated using the interview schedule was coded. Coding is the process of assigning numerical score or other character symbols to previously edited data (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013). Coding involves applying a set of rules to the data to transform information from one form to another. It is often a straightforward clerical task that involves transforming the information provided on an interview schedule or questionnaire into a meaningful numerical format (Terre



Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). Questions may include sections for comments that will allow the participants to elaborate which will result in a wider range of responses. Such data is more difficult to code numerically (Rule & Vaughn, 2011). For such responses, open coding was used allowing the researcher to use qualitative measures. A set of themes/categories for which the data appears to belong was developed.

### **3.8 Issues of trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is the key measure in qualitative research. Assessing trustworthiness is the indicator or a yard stick for data analysis of the study, findings, and conclusion (insert SOURCE). It is important for a study to be trusted as credible and rigorous; therefore, procedures for trustworthiness should be kept in mind. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria that they believe should be taken into consideration by qualitative researchers in quest of a trustworthy study. These include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The researcher tried to be certain that data were genuine and authentic, and that biasness and personal feelings were avoided as far as the study was concerned. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) for the study to be trustworthy, the researcher must be honest and have morals in carrying out the study so that it is accepted and believable. Below are four criteria discussed in relation to issues of trustworthiness, which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

#### **3.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility deals with the issue of compatibility of findings against the reality; it is to ensure that the findings are believable (Maree, 2016). In relation to this and to ensure credibility of the study, well-established methods were applied such as familiarising oneself with the participants as early as possible; using a well-defined purposive sampling; detailed data generation methods; frequent debriefing sessions between the researcher and supervisor. Detailed reflective notes and member-checks throughout the data generation process were kept by the researcher.

#### **3.8.2 Transferability**

Looking at the features of the case study, the findings may not be generalised (Creswell, 2014). The transferability in this study was achieved through laying down the case study boundaries, which was the professional development experiences of eThekwin Municipality employees. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability refers to the applicability of the same

study to other contexts. Rich and thick descriptions provide the overall picture of the setting to the reader; thus, the results turn out to be true, more real, and richer. It is for this reason that thick descriptions were used to express the participants' views in the current study. Therefore, it can be argued that this study achieved transferability.

### **3.8.3 Dependability**

Dependability means getting the same results twice for the same study administered (Kumar, 2011). To meet the dependability criteria, the study should be consistent, and repetition is likely to happen. The dependability issue was tackled by ensuring that the records were kept in the supervisor's cabinet. The researcher established rapport with research participants and thus kept trust. This helped because participants were free for the entire interview as they shared their genuine opinions without fear (Creswell, 2014). In terms of member-checking, the researcher ensured that during the interviews, the participants were understood and sometimes, rephrased questions to ensure understanding by the participants. Probing was also applied to make sure there was clear understanding of what each participant was saying (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Peer debriefing was also used to ensure credibility of this study. Data was honestly interpreted as conveyed by the participants.

### **3.8.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability is evidence that the results of the study can be confirmed by the participants. Confirmability is about ensuring that there are no biases on the part of the researcher (insert SOURCE). Therefore, the researcher ensured that personal feelings were put aside to focus on the true contributions of participants. Clarity was sought from the participants whenever the researcher did not understand what the participants were saying. Once the participants confirmed the researchers interpretation as accurate, it brought about confidence in the researcher and assurance that there was no misinterpretation. Another technique was giving the participants their transcripts back to check for accuracy of what they had communicated. Subjectivity was avoided as much as possible and the findings were reported as objectively as possible (Creswell, 2013). The interview questions were drafted and given to the supervisor for review.

## **3.9 Ethical Issues**

Ethics refer to the study of moral standards, and how they affect conduct or a system of moral principles governing the appropriate conduct of a person or a group (Creswell, 2012). Ethical

considerations are therefore guidelines for professional conduct or behaviour, and these are important to safeguard that there is no misuse of research or any inappropriate behaviour in conducting a study. All ethical standards were maintained and observed throughout the study. Firstly, an application for ethical clearance from the College Research office was sought. This ensured that the researcher was prepared to conduct research with human beings and that interactions with them would not cause any harm whatsoever. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) emphasise that under no circumstance should a research be harmful to the research participants, be it physical, emotional, psychological or any form of harm. Permission was also sought from the gatekeepers within the eThekweni Municipality to conduct the study among its employees. In addition, consent was sought from each participant. This was to ensure that their autonomy to participate or not to participate was respected. This is supported by Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) who note that coercion should not be used in having people participate in a study. All participants were informed about all aspects of the study. For example, they were informed that all information gathered was used for research and academic purposes only. This idea of the purpose of the study is highlighted by Dane (2011) who mentions that every researcher has to ensure that deception is not used in ethical research and as such, participants should be told the real purpose of a study. All participants were treated with respect and concern and were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point. To maintain confidentiality, anonymity of the participants was protected through use of pseudonyms.

### **3.10 Limitations of the study**

The study was carried out in four regions of the eThekweni municipality (South, North, Central, and West Regions). As such, the study cannot mirror the nation's standing on the professional development of employees from Municipalities nationwide. However, the purpose of qualitative research is not to capture what is throughout the country since no generalisation is intended. What is important in the context of this study is that through rich descriptions of the participants' experiences, a deeper understanding about how municipal employees feel about professional development programmes that have been offered would be realised.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

The research design, sampling procedures and methods used in the study were presented. Experiences of selected employees in a municipality, and the challenges they faced were shared through the interview sessions. Different categories of employees from all four regions

of the municipality participated in the study; thus, perspectives from diverse people were solicited. The next chapter presents an account of the participants experiences in response to the research questions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with issues of research design and methodology that was utilised in the study. This chapter focuses on presenting, analysing, interpreting, and discussing the data generated through semi-structured interviews. To observe anonymity of participants in the study, pseudonyms were used. This chapter profiles the demographic details of the participants and discusses the data through emergent themes. Verbatim accounts of participants' experiences are provided and used to discuss professional development in conjunction with the reviewed literature. Data is also presented in tables.

#### **4.2 Demographic Data**

Participants' demographic data which include age, gender, qualification levels and years of work experience are presented in the following sections. The research findings are presented in line with the study objectives. Below are the study participants' profiles as shown in Table 4.1 in relation to their gender, occupational positions, educational levels, and years of work experience in the eThekweni Municipality.

The study participants consisted of 5 males and 7 females who were interviewed from the four regions of the eThekweni Municipality. The ratio of the participants interviewed shows that gender bias is limited in the eThekweni Municipality, since its employees have a considerable number of females and is not predominantly male. Of these participants from all the four regions of the Municipality (South, North, Central and West Regions), 1 was a Senior Manager from Human Resources, 3 were Training Administrators, 1 was a Senior Clerk from Management Services, 1 was a Senior Pay Roll Administrator from Human Resources, 3 were Project Officers (with whom 1 was a Senior Project Officer) from eThekweni Municipal Academy, 1 was a Finance Administrator, 1 was an Administrator and 1 was a Skills Development Practitioner.

**Table 4.1: Demographic information of study participants**

	<b>Edward</b>	<b>Bongani</b>	<b>Lisiwe</b>	<b>Brendon</b>	<b>Tabeth</b>	<b>Faith</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Male – (Youth)	Female	Male	Female	Female
<b>Age Category</b>	40 – 45	20 -25	45- 50	40- 45	40-45	50-55
<b>Highest Qualifications</b>	B- Tech	Public Admin Diploma	Post Grad in Project Management Diploma	Bachelor’s Degree in Human Resource	Advance Diploma in Project Management	LLB Degree ( just completed)
<b>Previous Occupation</b>	Administrator for 7 years	N/A from University	Educator for 10 years	Human Recourse Officer – 12 Years	Project Coordinator for 5 years	Educator for 21 years
<b>Current Occupation</b>	Human Resources Manager	Senior Project Officer	Administrator	Skills Development Practitioner	Project Officer	Finance Administrator
<b>Years of Experience in the Municipality</b>	11 years	2 years	12 years	18 years	10 years	8 years

	<b>Mbongeni</b>	<b>Zenzo</b>	<b>Nothando</b>	<b>Grace</b>	<b>Siphiwe</b>	<b>Lindiwe</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
<b>Age Category</b>	50-55	45-50	50-55	30-35	35-40	30-35
<b>Highest Qualifications</b>	Matric	B-Tech	Diploma in Human Resources	Diploma in Project Management	Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences	Diploma in Public Administration
<b>Previous Occupation</b>	Clerk for 15 years	Facilitator for 10 years	Pay Roll Administrator for 10 years	Project Officer for 3 years	Training Administration	Senior Clerk for 4 years
<b>Current Occupation</b>	Senior Clerk	Training Administrator	Senior Pay Roll Administrator	Training Administrator	Administrator	Project Officer
<b>Years of Experience in the Municipality</b>	23 years	8 years	18 years	10 years	8 years	9 years





Table 4.2 below shows the range in number of years of participants' work experience.

**Table 4.2: Participants' years of work experience in the eThekwin Municipality**

<b>Years of work experience</b>	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25
<b>Number of participants</b>	1	6	2	2	1

As illustrated by the above table, of all the participants interviewed, 1 had worked in the eThekwin Municipality for a period of 0-5 years; 6 had been in the eThekwin Municipality for 6-10 years; 2 had work experience of 11-15 years; 2 had 16-20 years of work experience; and only 1 had worked for the municipality for 21-25 years. The participant who had work experience of 0-5 years was the Senior Project Officer; those who had work experience of 6-10 years were 2 project officers, 2 Training Administrators, 1 Administrator and 1 Finance Administrator. Employees who had work experience of 11-15 years included 1 Administrator and 1 Human Resource Manager; and those with work experience of 16-20 years were the Senior Pay Roll Administrator and the Skills Development Practitioner. The only participant who had 21-25 years of work experience was the Senior Clerk. From this data it can be deduced that most of the participants interviewed who held senior positions had at least 10 years or more of work experience in the eThekwin Municipality, with one of the Training Administrators having 10 years, while both the Senior Pay Roll Administrator and the Skills Development Practitioner having 18 years. Only one participant who held a senior position had 2 years of experience, that is, the Senior Project Officer. However, most of the participants (50%, 6 of the 12 participants) had work experience of 6-10 years.

Table 4.3 below shows the highest qualification levels of the study participants.

**Table 4.3: Participants' educational profiles**

<b>Highest educational level</b>	Matric	Diploma	B-Tech	Degree	Postgraduate qualification
<b>Number of participants</b>	1	5	2	3	1

As indicated in Table 4.3, of all the 12 participants interviewed from the four regions of eThekweni Municipality, 1 had Matric as their highest qualification, 5 had a Diploma, 2 had B-Tech as their highest educational level, 3 had a Degree and 1 had a master's degree as the highest qualification. This shows that most of the participants had a Diploma as their highest educational level, followed by those with Degrees, those with B-Tech, one individual with Matric qualification and another with a master's degree as their highest educational qualification. Therefore, with such educational qualifications, professional development becomes imperative to the Municipality's employees in offering quality service.

### **4.3 Data presentation and discussion**

This section focuses on the presentation, discussion and analysis of findings of the study. The findings highlight the experiences of the eThekweni Municipality employees regarding the professional development support they receive; the challenges encountered by the eThekweni Municipality employees in the provision of professional development; and how professional development in the eThekweni Municipality can be enhanced. The chapter also concurrently discusses recommendations given by participants in relation to professional development of employees in municipalities. Data is presented under four major themes which include: (a) Experiences of eThekweni Municipality employees regarding professional development support received; (b) Relevance of the professional development courses, training and programmes offered by the eThekweni Municipality; (c) Challenges encountered by eThekweni employees in the provision of professional development; and (d) Suggestions for enhancing professional development in the eThekweni Municipality. The discussion of these themes includes engagement with the reviewed literature in Chapter Two.

#### **4.3.1 Experiences of eThekweni Municipality employees regarding professional development support received**

This section presents the study findings in relation to the study's first objective, which is to explore the experiences of the eThekweni Municipality employees regarding professional development support received. Their experiences spanned several aspects starting with their understanding of what professional development is about.

As a starting point, the participants were asked to give their understanding of what professional development is. It emerged from the interviews that most participants understood professional development as improving the employees' skills to enable them execute their duties more effectively. When asked to give his own understanding of professional development, Edward, a Senior Clerk, shared:

*Professional development is an activity or programme planned with an intention of developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies of the employees so that they become competent to perform their jobs or their key performance areas...*

Sharing similar views as Edward above, Brendon, a Skills Development Practitioner defined professional development as “*Trainings given to work employees in order to enhance the understanding of their work as well as improving their capabilities*”. While agreeing with the participants above, Zenzo, a Training Administrator, went a step further in describing professional development by providing a comprehensive view:

*Any intervention formal or informal that will ensure that professionalism remains, and you keep with the latest development and that employees perform as expected with a particular level of expertise.*

Therefore, the data indicates that professional development is understood as a way in which an organisation ensures that its employees are skilled, have gained enough knowledge of their various duties, and are equipped to do their jobs better. Moreover, such development activity can either be formal or informal, but whatever the case may be, professional development should function to ensure that employees are updated with the latest developments in their various fields to keep up with professionalism and expertise in the services they offer. Such an understanding aligns with how different scholars define professional development. Gerber *et al.* (2007) and Dessler (2008) refer to professional development as training, which is a learning experience that brings change to the employees' or individuals' performance on the job. Dessler (2008) emphasises that professional development is an aspect of changing or developing an employee's skills and abilities in the organisation with the purpose of enhancing their performance. Therefore, this definition supports most of the participants' understanding of professional development. Echoing the views above, Mbongeni, a Senior Clerk added that:

*Professional development is a means that improves the knowledge of the employees in terms of how they perform their duties, as well as in terms of where they see themselves going.*

Such an understanding indicates that professional development has a bearing on how employees see themselves in the long run within the organisation. This idea was cemented by Grace, a Training Administrator who reported that:

*Managers should open room for professional development of their subordinates and have to understand that if you are developing a person you should not think that you are increasing their prospects. If the door opens for professional development of employees, it automatically benefits the organisation as a whole and if you close the doors for the employees, it may be a sign that you don't believe in their abilities and people don't stay in an organisation that does not appreciate their abilities and efforts.*

Hence, the Municipality should be aware that failure to support employees in professional development may cause the employees to view their abilities as worthless. This is also stressed by another participant who noted that professional development involves both training and personal growth of employees which triggers a change in attitudes. One participant highlighted that it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the work and the skills of his or her employees are being developed so that they can do their jobs effectively and competently. The participant concluded by saying that the employer therefore has a responsibility to ensure that employees are sent for training to update the skills they have. Thus, receiving professional development from the organisation is an obligation for the employer and as such, employees should not struggle getting the necessary support from their employers. The aspect supports the 'Effective Training Model' used in this study by Dena and Patsy (2003). The model emphasises that training should be able to meet both the personal needs and address the organisational needs.

#### **4.3.1.1 Relevance of the professional development courses, training and programmes offered by the eThekwin Municipality**

There was diversity of views with regards to the relevance of professional development activities. It emerged from the study that the participants had diverse views on the relevance of the professional development courses, training, programmes, seminars, workshops and conferences offered by

eThekwini Municipality. Some participants found that the professional development was relevant whilst others found it irrelevant owing to several reasons as outlined below.

Most of the participants found that professional development (PD) offered by the Municipality were relevant and felt that they would recommend the training and courses to employees from other municipalities. Much information found to be useful was practical professional knowledge and skills received especially through courses, training, seminars, workshops and conferences. The relevance was echoed by Edward, a Senior Clerk who mentioned that practical case studies given during the management and supervisory development programmes spoke directly to his field of work. These case studies offered practical examples of problems that were solved through the concepts taught and these aided the skills to execute his job professionally. As such, Edward found the PD he received extremely helpful and recommended that employees from other municipalities in his position should participate in those programmes. Similarly, Bongani, a Senior Project Officer, found that PD was relevant to him as he received training through the Conflict Management Course together with the Supervisory Development Programme. He shared stating that:

*The Supervisory Development Programme helped me understand my supervisory duties more better and in depth....As for Conflict Management Course, I got to know a lot of issues from other employees, others people's opinions and I came to appreciate other people's understanding of different issues one can come across in an organisation as well as understanding my own delusions.*

Zenzo, a Training Administrator also found the PD programme he received to be relevant and useful. He mentioned that:

*I facilitate the development of the workplace skills as well as ensuring that it gets implemented. I further advise the unit in terms of the relevant training needed for the development of their staff both technically and in the form of supportive training. As such, the Municipality helped me study towards a diploma from a certificate and afterwards did a qualification of B-Tech in human resources through the Assisted Education Programme. This support I got has widened my scope of knowledge in terms of how to function and how to look into the future in terms of bringing in professionals because we should be able to attract as well as retain staff available.*

This proves that professional development is necessary, since it widens the employees' scope of knowledge and executing their duties better. Zenzo, a Training Administrator viewed the eThekweni Municipality as being supportive in professional development, since the organisation offered him both a study leave and an examination leave. Others noted that the courses they got, such as Presentation Skills were immensely helpful as they could not stand before an audience, but through the course, acquired the skills they could not access from their formal education. Presentation Skills were also reported to make the audience gain interest into one's presentation as they helped those who attended to speak fluently. Thus, this course helped boost the confidence of some employees who were initially shy to stand before an audience. Not only is professional development relevant on a professional level, but also a personal level in the work environment. This is echoed by Lisiwe, an Administrator, when she said the following:

*Before attending the Emotional Intelligence and Affective Communication course I couldn't communicate, I lacked those skills but after attending the course it really helped me. Now I am aware of my own emotions and how my emotions can affect the people around me, and I have also learnt how to express myself openly without any anxiety.*

This demonstrates that professional development has also an impact on employees personally as they come to know themselves better through the courses and training offered. It can be argued that it does not only benefit the individual alone in the workplace, but also those around them. This idea was emphasised by Lindiwe, a Project Officer, who noted that the Customer Care Training helped her in relation to dealing with customers with bad attitudes as they offer services. Due to the training that offered self-awareness, the participants noted that the way they respond to clients changed and they would address them cautiously.

Although some participants felt that the professional development they received from the eThekweni Municipality was relevant and helpful, others felt it did not make any change or positive impact on them as employees due to several reasons. This is supported by Mbongeni, a Senior Clerk. When asked about the response of his colleagues to the professional development, he responded by saying that some were positive, while others were not:

*Others appreciate the training offered but there are few who feel we have not changed our courses for quite some time now, saying we are still implementing courses that have been there for a number of years and that they would like to see a change in that. Some of the*

*change they want include a credential course and get a qualification at the end of the training because currently our courses are generic. As such, courses end up not so specific to the jobs of some employees.*

For this reason, some employees no longer find the professional development offered by the eThekweni Municipality to be relevant. It can be deduced that offering professional development as a generic activity may have adverse effects on organisations as resources can be wasted on courses or training that is not specific and relevant to one's job and duties. This point was also highlighted by Brendon, a Skills Development Practitioner, saying:

*We have a group of employees who go for training and come back complaining that what they got is not what they expected because there was no analysis of the needs prior to training.*

This illustrates that if professional development tends to be generic and not specific it does not meet the needs or fill in gaps in knowledge and skills needed to improve the execution of employees' duties. Interestingly, in as much as these courses tend to be repeated without introduction of new courses, some employees are still not accommodated in the professional development of the eThekweni Municipality. This was echoed by Siphwe, a Training Administrator who noted that there were other colleagues who complained that they had not had access to professional development for some years, although they aspired attending several courses. This raises questions about the criteria that are used to identify professional development programmes and participants. Moreover, these courses have been reported to become increasingly irrelevant to old staff compared to fresh staff. For instance, Lisiwe, an Administrator who has been in the eThekweni Municipality for 9 years had this to say:

*To some extent it is relevant and to the other extent it is no longer relevant. To a greater extent, professional development has turned to be relevant and helpful to new staff, for example, Presentation Skills and Effective Public Speaking.*

The views expressed by Lisiwe were also repeated by Nothando, a Senior Pay Roll Administrator who stated:

*There is more of repetition of the courses offered internally and there is need for more courses to be offered. I have attended most of the courses offered internally and I feel we need more courses because you end up doing one and the same thing over and over again going for a*

*course you attended 2 or 3 years back. In that case professional development doesn't become meaningful.*

It is evident that professional development programmes have been perceived by many participants to be irrelevant especially to old staff members who felt that there were repetitions of the courses and training offered in the eThekweni Municipality. Juneja (2018) contends that refresher training programmes are planned to circumvent personnel obsolescence. Refresher training will be majorly employed to enhance the development of old municipal staff to bring them to speed with current technological changes and system improvements. However, this seems not to be the case with the old staff of eThekweni Municipality as they view doing training they once did as repetition and as such, irrelevant.

From the professional development offered above, it can be argued that eThekweni Municipality predominantly offers on-the-job training. On-the-job training is given to employees at the workplace by their superiors and bosses. Juneja (2018), and Asghar and Ahmad (2014) argue that managers ought to sit with their team members on a regular basis, train them on modern technologies and skill sets to help them cope with the changes. On-the-job training makes employees capable of handling bigger responsibilities. This was clear from the participants who reported that they sit together with their supervisors and managers in deciding which training to offer and to whom; though this was seen not to be the case in all four regions. However, off-the-job training is also evident in the Municipality in the form of long-term professional development.

#### **4.3.2 Challenges encountered by eThekweni employees in the provision of professional development**

Several challenges emerged from the study in relation to the provision and support of professional development in the eThekweni Municipality which include inadequate budgets for professional development, lack of needs analysis in the provision of professional development, Decision-making about who receives professional development, limited external training, improper communication channels, and using professional development as a compliance issue, not as a strategic employee empowerment tool.



#### 4.3.2.1 Inadequate budgets

It emerged from participants in the study that in all four regions of the eThekweni Municipality, financial support for professional development was inadequate. Budget allocations for such an important exercise were too low and that made it difficult to professionally develop all the employees in the four regions. This also restrained the Municipality from offering professional development courses and training programmes. Due to these financial constraints, Municipal employees ended up getting in-housing training most of the time and did not get external training courses even when these were desirable. In relation to this, Faith, a Finance Administrator said:

*Once you have clients who want to do a course that you have in the Municipality, it becomes a budget factor and once it is like that there is nothing we can do. That itself makes people lack interest in the WSP because we are always offering in-house training, when are we going to go out and offer training to others out there?*

The views expressed by Faith were also shared by Bongani, a Senior Project Officer. He stated:

*Another challenge is lack of facilities on top of budget constraints. Even if the Municipality has good courses to offer it can't accommodate other employees from outside the region for training because of issues such as accommodation. Once someone comes from outside Durban it will be a challenge.*

This also makes the Municipality unable to offer courses, training or programmes. However, it can be argued that if adequate budget is availed for professional development, offering these courses, training and programmes can work as a source of revenue for the Municipality. This can work for the better of the Municipality in developing its own employees as Brendon, a Skills Development Practitioner reported:

*Demand for professional development is too high and we do not succeed in meeting that demand because of lack of funds due to the size of the organisation as we have more than 20 000 employees.*

Since the Municipality does not offer professional development to organisations outside of their services due to inadequate budgets, it impedes internal employees from maximising on their professional development. Tabeth, a Project Officer, echoed this when she said:

*There are a lot of limitations in attending conferences because of budget constraints, for example, when you are a project officer and there is a project management conference, getting a budget for the conference is a challenge and you may end up never attending the conference.*

While participants in management positions complained about inadequate budgets, other participants questioned several decisions made by management on these issues. One of them was about the type of PD activities that they as senior management attended compared to the needs of junior staff who require skills most. This is what Grace, a Training Administrator, said in this regard:

*In as much as management cry about budget constraints, if it is something fancy you will see them attending, for example, conferences that may require R9000 yet such money can be used to develop 2 or 3 people with need for urgent development professionally.*

This then raises a question of whether this issue is really about budget constraints, prioritisation or misuse of funds. This demonstrates that allocation of resources is a challenge in the Municipality in relation to professional development. This was emphasised by Nothando, a Senior Pay Roll Administrator, who reported that they do not always get enough budget for professional development and guessed that management has its own priorities, and in a way, deprive them of the opportunity for learning and development. This finding is in congruence with one study conducted at the Tanzania's Ministry of Health (MoH) by Hamis (2013). The study discovered that training at the Ministry was not operational due to the government failing to provide enough budget for training resolution. Furthermore, the training programmes were not executed, and no proper evaluation was conducted to measure training done and acquired. In addition, there was no translation of training to work performance.

#### **4.3.2.2 Lack of Needs Analysis**

It was evident from the data that as professional development is offered, it did not address the work needs of employees. This is further worsened by lack of needs analysis as the professional development undertakings are planned. On this issue, Faith, a Finance Administrator said:

*Training sessions are not conducted after a proper needs analysis. People don't have to attend courses just for the sake of attending when it is not relevant to their duties.*

The issue of careful needs analysis and the need for participation of staff in that process was also highlighted by Edward, a Senior Clerk who said:

*There is need to sit down with the employees and ask them if they really need the course or training and weigh the responses they give. This is important because the organisation should develop the core needs that will capacitate the employees.*

This shows that as much as professional development is imperative in the duties of the eThekweni Municipality, as reported by many participants, narratives from participants also suggest that such training sessions were organised without proper needs analysis and no consultation with staff concerned. Another participant noted that the enormous number of employees in the Municipality (more than 20 000) makes it difficult to conduct needs analysis of all the employees. It can then be said that if professional development unit in the Municipality does not conduct a needs analysis before courses, training or programmes, chances are that the professional development offered will not sufficiently address the knowledge and skills gaps in the employees. Dessler (2008) postulates that training and development must consist of five steps, namely: needs analysis, instruction scheme, endorsement, execution, and evaluation. By virtue of having needs analysis as the first step, the current study's finding is in sync with other literature on the importance of careful needs analysis before embarking on PD programmes.

#### **4.3.2.3 Decision making about who receives professional development**

The last challenge discussed relating to needs analysis is closely linked to decision-making about who receives professional development. The data indicates that although certain guiding frameworks existed that speak to professional development, these were implemented differently depending on the line managers of the region. This is mainly attributed to the type of leadership at each region and how it engaged its employees, either with up-ward engagement or down-ward engagement. It also emergent from the study that some employees were pleased with how this is done, while others were not. When asked how decisions are made on the kind of training, course or development programme to be offered, as well as selection of who goes and for what reasons, Zenzo, a Training Administrator said:

*When understanding and observing protocol, it should be line management; they would start by approving the WSP that these people will be going for this particular training. Prior notification would have been sent in a way of asking them to release their employees because that forms part of planning of their day-to-day work. In a 'perfect world' this should be done*

*based on an employee's performance appraisal. However, in reality, managers are mainly concerned with the core business which is service delivery and unfortunately learning and development tend to sit at the back seat in their planning.*

It emerged from the study that the four regions of the eThekweni Municipality are not consistent in the processes of selecting the kind of training or professional development needed, as well as identifying who goes for the training and why. This demonstrates that what ought to be done in relation to professional development of these employees and what is on the ground is controversial. If learning and development takes a back seat of the planning of line managers, it can be argued that the Municipality, to a certain extent, is not supportive of professional development of its employees to the maximum. This is stressed by Mbongeni, a Senior Clerk who reported that:

*What should be really done is not followed. When choosing who to attend there is need for a job profiling so that each position in the Municipality will have certain training an individual needs to attend, and this will make the employees be aware of the next training they will be needing. However, management doesn't really understand the need for that and overlook that because it is quite a long process and the Municipality has quite a lot of employees.*

This indicates that the way some management selects employees for professional development can be biased and this can have a bearing on offering adequate support for employees as some issues of importance are overlooked. This can be attributed to a lot of employees that make some management not follow protocols in relation to offering professional development in the eThekweni Municipality. This finding can be supported by ILO (2016), which states that challenges such as understanding and determination of training needs, relevant statutory frameworks, provision of proper training and the assessment of development programmes all influence the employees receiving support for their professional development.

#### **4.3.2.4 Limited exposure to external training and lack of internal expertise**

Many participants reported they had little or no exposure to external training as part of their professional development. Their views were that usually, the training courses and programmes that would be offered by external agencies would be truly relevant to their developmental needs in terms of enhancement, and they cannot attend because of limited financial support. As a result, these

employees get training offered internally with people who sometimes lack expertise. In relation, Mbongeni, a Senior Clerk reported:

*The challenge is that sometimes, something new will be there externally and management always complain about budget and we end being confined to internal courses and training.*

A challenge that emanates from this as noted by the participants is that the old staff will end up not benefiting from professional development, since it becomes monotonous as they have been receiving the same thing repetitively. This was mainly attributed to the fact that many courses are not changed for a long time. Consequently, only the new staff end up benefiting from professional development offered internally. Usually, they receive such training as part of their induction processes. In terms of expertise, Brendon, a Skills Development Practitioner said:

*Justice needs to be done in terms of training analysis as most of the time, we end up deferring from what we ought to offer. For example, training in accounting will be done by the supervisor because the supervisor happens to be an accountant by profession but without facilitation expertise. As a result, they end up not doing a very good job in training.*

This implies that if the Municipality is to offer in-house professional development it must ensure that the internal staff have expertise needed to make professional development relevant and for the employees to appreciate the Municipality's efforts in developing them professionally. To that end, Grace, a Training Administrator said:

*Sometimes we get trainers without expertise on the training that is needed. Sometimes there is need for specialised training or courses instead of generic training.*

The above stories demonstrate that a challenge is on the Municipality on not having experts on specific training that offer in-depth knowledge and equip the employees with advanced skills. Consequently, employees lose interest in the activities of their own organisation. Roux (2011) notes that enough monetary means in the organisations sustain training. Nevertheless, inadequate financial resources in the form of investment in the development of human resources function and departmental costs impede training in the organisation. It is for this reason that Sambrook (2002) attributes to most organisations doing more internal training than external training.

Another challenge that emanated from the study is improper communication channels regarding the way professional development is organised and communicated to the employees in the Municipality. It was noted that there was no fairness sometimes in how professional development is offered. Tabeth, a Project Officer, complained that:

*There are injustices in how this whole thing goes and is organised. Sometimes you will find that there is a certain individual who goes for many trainings, yet another colleague may have never attended a single training.*

Other employees reported that they were never informed of any professional development, but they have been in the organisation for quite a considerable time. No communication is offered as to why they are in such a position in terms of development. In connection to that, Zenzo, a Training Administrator said:

*The main challenge here is communication. There is lack of communication because by communicating eventually people become informed and get to understand what is being done and perhaps could be in a position to provide support to make whatever initiative a success if what is happening is communicated to them.*

Therefore, professional development seems to be done obscurely because of lack of clear communication with the whole staff. This issue of communication was also noted to include training that is cancelled abruptly without any apologies, yet one would have taken his or her time preparing for them.

#### **4.3.2.5 Using professional development as a compliance issue, not as a strategic employee empowerment tool**

Another issue that emerged when discussing challenges surrounding professional development of staff was the issue of management using professional development mostly as a compliance and not a strategic employee empowerment tool. This is despite evidence from literature suggesting that empowered staff are more likely to deliver quality service to their clients. This view was expressed by Grace, a Training Administrator who argued:

*In relation to WSP, managers use professional development just for compliance and not as a strategic tool and once it is used like that you don't get real outcomes. I am saying this because*

*I once asked a senior manager if he needed the training and he said, 'no I just put it there so that I can plan and give feedback.' This results in a poor WSP, yet we need a quality WSP. Therefore, sometimes managers comply just to get out of trouble with the legislation, for example, the Skills Development Act.*

Given such a scenario, one can argue that employees are not guaranteed to receive quality professional development because it is used as a way of following work frameworks and legislation and not as a strategic tool. The issue was also raised by Bongani, a Senior Project Officer, who argued that:

*Sometimes management offers professional development as evidence that indeed, the learning and development programme exists, although with no effort or proper planning. Hence, this becomes a great challenge especially if one considers the problem to be emanating from management.*

Drawing from a number of challenges discussed, it is evident that the issue of employee empowerment is not taken seriously by line managers as contemplated in government policy. Policy, for instance the Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998, makes it clear that every organisation has an obligation to develop its employees' skills in accordance to their available resources. Therefore, failure to oblige to such policies makes the duties of the managers questionable.

#### **4.4 Suggestions for enhancing professional development in the eThekweni Municipality**

When asked what can be done to enhance professional development in the eThekweni Municipality, most participants raised issues related to addressing most of the challenges they face in provision and support of professional development by the Municipality. The ideas raised included awarding employees with recognised certificates of competence upon completion of training; having qualified trainers who are experts; offering more relevant programmes, as well as increasing budgets for professional development.

Participants in the study did not only share their experiences of professional development at their workplaces, but they also made suggestions about how such programmes can be improved. It emerged from the study that the Municipality has several issues to consider if it is to enhance the professional development of its employees. Therefore, the three main suggestions made by the

participants include the notion of getting a form of formal recognition for attending professional development courses; getting formal certificates acknowledging competence and skills, as well as being taught by highly skilled facilitators who are experts in their respective fields of study. The ideas that were offered by the participants varied depending on the experiences they had in relation to professional development in the organisation. Some participants felt that it would be worth the while if formal recognition would be given to them for attending and obtaining competence in the particular skills area. For instance, Bongani, a Senior Project Officer argued:

*The Municipality should offer recognised certificates of competence upon completion of any course, training or programme to acknowledge the time and efforts invested in the training.*

Similar sentiments were shared by other participants. For instance, one of the participants argued that, globally, it is not enough to just attend a course, but at the end there is no formal acknowledgement in the form of a certificate. To emphasise this point, Mbongeni, a Senior Clerk had this to say in this regard:

*Today's world has changed, and professional development should not only focus on knowledge but also recognition.*

Therefore, a number of participants felt that if the Municipality offers certificates of competence upon completion of a course or training, it would really assist in its provision and support of professional development. This would allow its employees to gain confidence in the Municipality's academy. In agreement, Tan *et al.* (2003) believe that when organisations are providing training programmes to employees, they are making huge investments that will help meet the needs of both the employer and the employee. This proves that the Municipality should be aware of what keeps people interested as they receive professional development. For these individuals, gaining recognisable certificates after participating in professional development is what attracts them. Not only was this issue raised concerning internal employees only, but Nothando, a Senior Pay Roll Administrator, noted that if the Municipality offers professional development with recognised certificates internally, it would also attract other employees from outside the Municipality, which can work to the advantage of the organisation. Therefore, if no certification is offered at all or certificates that cannot be recognised outside the Municipality, it becomes a challenge to attract outsiders to get the knowledge and skills that may be in the Municipality.



The third suggestion made to enhance the provision and support of professional development in the eThekweni Municipality was getting qualified trainers who are technical experts to do the training. Implied in their messages was that, perhaps some trainers were not properly qualified or that they did not show much confidence in what they were doing. This view was stated by Faith, a Finance Administrator:

*This is necessary in order to make the employees gain confidence in the courses and training offered internally, as well as, bridging the gap for the training they cannot get externally due to financial constraints.*

In addition, it was argued that appointing external experts would create room for external employees to be attracted to the services and create revenue for the Municipality. On the other hand, Schuler and Jackson (2006) noted that when the employer is providing training and development opportunities to employees, it helps in developing their own personal competitive advantage and to ensure their long-term employability. However, for this to be realised there is need to increase budgets for professional development. Therefore, this literature portrays different views of internal training to the findings from the participants of the current study. It can thus be argued that to curb the challenge of financial constraints that restricts the employees from getting external courses, training and programmes, the Municipality should ensure it has qualified trainers with abilities and not giving authority to superiors who are not qualified. As such, the Municipality must be equipped with different professionals and technical experts in different fields so that employees do not need to go outside but are trained internally.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the presentation of the study results. The data presented focused on the objectives of the study which were to explore the experiences of eThekweni Municipality employees regarding the professional development they support; to identify the challenges observed by the eThekweni employees in the provision of professional development; and to establish how professional development in the eThekweni Municipality can be enhanced. According to the accounts given by the participants, it emerged that some of the participants viewed professional development as relevant since it helped them in executing their duties better, whilst others viewed it as irrelevant.

Such sentiments touched on a few factors including perceptions that some courses were monotonous. The next chapter presents the findings and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented and discussed the data that emerged from the analysis of semi-structured interviews. This chapter provides a summary of the entire study. The summary of the research findings is in line with the objectives of the study. The objectives were to explore the experiences of eThekwin Municipality employees regarding professional development and the support they receive; to identify the challenges observed by eThekwin employees in the provision of professional development; and to establish how professional development in the eThekwin Municipality can be enhanced. The chapter further discusses the findings of the study followed by recommendations and a conclusion.

#### **5.2 Summary of the study**

The current study consists of five chapters with the first focusing on the background to the study. The chapter indicates the nature of the problem and motivation for the need to undertake the study. Research questions as well as the objectives are presented, and a brief description of the methodology and overview of chapters was provided. The chapter is followed by a comprehensive and detailed review of literature on professional development. Included in the review are two theories that frame the study. The third chapter discusses the methodological procedures applied in the study. Foregrounding the discussion of methodology is the presentation of the interpretive paradigm which underpinned the study. This paradigm was preferred mainly because it allowed the researcher to analyse the views and experiences of the participants from their own perspectives. Such a paradigmatic stance also enabled employees as research participants to share their views and provide a better understanding of their experiences regarding professional development. Since the paradigm adopted was interpretive in nature, a case study design was adopted.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted in each of the four regions of the eThekwin Municipality. Hence, issues discussed during the interview were derived from the research questions and were used to gather participants' views on their experiences of professional development from the organisation. The fourth chapter focused on the presentation and a detailed discussion of data

generated from semi-structured interviews. Verbatim accounts of participants' experiences were provided and four broad themes emerged after the analysis of the data. The final chapter concludes the study by providing an overview of the study and summarising the discussion of findings drawn from the analysis of the data presented in Chapter Four. Finally, recommendations informed by the findings of the study and reviewed literature are also provided.

### **5.3 Presentation and discussion of findings**

The findings were derived from the discussions the researcher had with the following participants who occupied different positions within eThekweni's four regions: 1 Senior Manager from Human Resources; 3 Training Administrators; 1 Senior Clerk from Management Services; 1 Pay Roll Administrator from Human Resources; 3 Project Officers from eThekweni Municipal Academy; 1 Finance Administrator; 1 Administrator, as well as 1 Skills Development Practitioner. The research questions that guided the presentation of findings were as follows:

- What are the experiences of selected eThekweni Municipality employees regarding the professional development support they receive?
- What are the current challenges observed by selected employees in the provision of professional development?
- How can provision of professional development at eThekweni Municipality be enhanced?

The research questions are used in discussing the findings below:

#### **5.3.1 What are the experiences of selected eThekweni Municipality employees regarding the professional development support they receive?**

The findings indicate that participants understood what professional development should be about and their experiences suggested that some viewed professional development as being supported by their employer. They also expressed the view that the PD activities they engaged in were relevant, since it helped in executing their duties better. However, there were also some participants who expressed negative views and experiences. These participants highlighted that it is not fully supported and irrelevant owing to monotonous courses, training and programmes. The majority view emerging from those participants who reported professional development to be relevant were new employees as compared to old staff. The reason was based on the view that the PD programmes

provided by the Municipality were hardly ever changed or adjusted to changing times. Therefore, once attending a PD programme on any particular aspect, one can expect to receive the same information in many years to come. This was the reason why older staff found the PD activities to be monotonous (see **section 4.3.1.1 of Chapter Four**).

It also emerged that participants were concerned about the manner that PD activities were chosen and how the participants were identified, since consultations were very limited in that regard, and this depended on the line manager and geographical area once worked at. The decisions pertaining to what professional development to offer and who it should be offered to seemed different with each region. Some participants reported that the decision on receiving a type of professional development rested with their line managers upon recommendations from their immediate supervisors. On the other hand, other participants reported that the decision as to who goes for professional development and specifically what type of professional development is a matter of engagement of the employee, the immediate supervisor and the line manager. There was a diversity of views about the process of identifying participants in PD activities. Some maintained that there were engagements pertaining to who should participate, and this category of participants argued that the process involved a needs analysis as perceived by the immediate supervisor, as well as the employee's perception of the area he or she feels needs to be developed to perform the respective occupational duties (see **section 4.3.2.3 in Chapter Four**).

Finally, the findings clearly indicate that most of the professional development activities offered to the employees of eThekweni Municipality were internal to the organisation. This internal provision of professional development was reported to be guided by the organisation's brochures that comprise the trainings, courses and programmes available in the municipality. However, such internally developed programmes were said to be inferior in quality compared to those offered by external agencies. Unfortunately, access to such PD programmes was highly limited due to financial constraints (see **section 4.3.2.4 of Chapter four**).

### **5.3.2 What are the current challenges observed by selected employees in the provision of professional development?**

There were many issues that posed as challenges to the participants. These challenges encountered by the eThekweni Municipality employees in the provision of professional development included inadequate budgets; lack of needs analysis before staff could be sent to PD programme or training;

processes of deciding on who should attend PD training, as well as which training to attend; limited access to external training; inadequate and improper communication channels; as well as the tendency to use professional development as a compliance measure rather than as a strategic employee empowerment tool. Most of the participants felt that the greatest challenge they observed with regards to the professional development programme was the issue of budgetary constraints. Consequently, this made some employees unable to obtain the professional development activities they deemed necessary to effectively execute their duties in the municipality. They further viewed some of the courses offered internally by the Municipality as irrelevant. This was mainly because the Municipality hardly engaged in a proper needs analysis to determine the types of professional development programmes, and also to identify staff members who needed to attend such PD activities. The reason why participants felt that needs analysis was not done is because as employees they were never consulted on decisions regarding areas in which they felt they needed professional development, yet they were offered PD activities. In some instances, the kind of PD activities offered did not address their occupational needs (see **section 4.3.2.2 of Chapter Four**).

Moreover, the findings suggest that staff members had limited access to external professional development programmes offered by external experts who were well-trained in their fields. Again, the limited exposure to appropriate PD programmes offered by experts outside of the Municipality was reportedly linked to limited budget allocation for that type of training. In addition, the kind of PD programmes offered by the Municipality lacked creativity, innovation and adaptability in order to respond to the current needs of employees. As a result, only new employees found internal developed programmes useful as they were exposed to them for the first time. However, older staff members that had been employees of the Municipality for five years and more did not benefit from these training sessions, and had found them to be monotonous (see **section 4.3.1.1 of Chapter Four**).

#### **5.3.4 How can provision of professional development at eThekweni Municipality be enhanced?**

The findings also indicate that participants had some views about how PD activities organised by the Municipality can be enhanced in order to respond to the needs of the employees. One of the issues that participants suggested should be changed relates to the issuing of certificates for attending and proving to be competent in the area of focus. Participants recommended that the eThekweni Municipality should first offer high quality accredited PD programmes and secondly, offer recognised certificates of competence after completion of a course. The other suggestion was that

the Municipality should take the issue of professional development seriously and then budget for it properly to demonstrate that they are giving serious consideration to issues of competence and professional development (see **section 4.3.2.1 of Chapter Four**).

The other issue that participants thought could enhance the quality of the PD activities provided was the appointment of properly qualified trainers to train the employees including those responsible for training. Most employees noted that one of the ways to enhance professional development in eThekweni Municipality is to have qualified trainers with expertise, as they will go a long way in ensuring that the professional development is offered. In that way, there will be cross pollination of ideas between internal trainers and external experts; thus, making the environment conducive, whereby quality programmes will be easily accessed by employees (see **Section.....of Chapter Four**).

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The third research question and the participants' responses to it have provided sufficient information concerning what should happen in the Municipality regarding its commitment to offering high quality PD programmes. Recommendations can be summarised into three broad issues. Firstly, a strategic and political decision about whether the Municipality is prepared to offer PD programmes that incorporates the support of the employees should be made. This can be done by showing its commitment to making adequate funding for PD programmes. Hence, staff members will be exposed to a variety of PD programmes that will correspond with their occupational needs. Consequently, the quality of service delivery will be enhanced.

The second recommendation relates to leadership that should prevail within the Municipality. Leadership that exists should be transparent and inclusive of staff so that when decisions are made about which programme to be offered and which staff member to attend, there is no confusion about issues of relevance of programmes offered. The findings have clearly shown that participants understood what professional development is about, and therefore, have valuable contribution in terms of articulating their needs and the types of PD programmes they think would suit their needs. The third important recommendation is about recognition of competencies gained during training. It is important that certificates be given to employees to acknowledge their skills acquisition.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter concludes the study on the experiences of eThekweni Municipality employees regarding the provision of professional development by the organisation. The findings have shown that the employees have clear ideas about what professional development is all about and their role in it. It emerged very strongly in the findings that employees were not properly consulted about professional development programmes. They further felt that most of them were generic, merely meant to induct new staff members rather than to further their expertise in their respective areas of operation.



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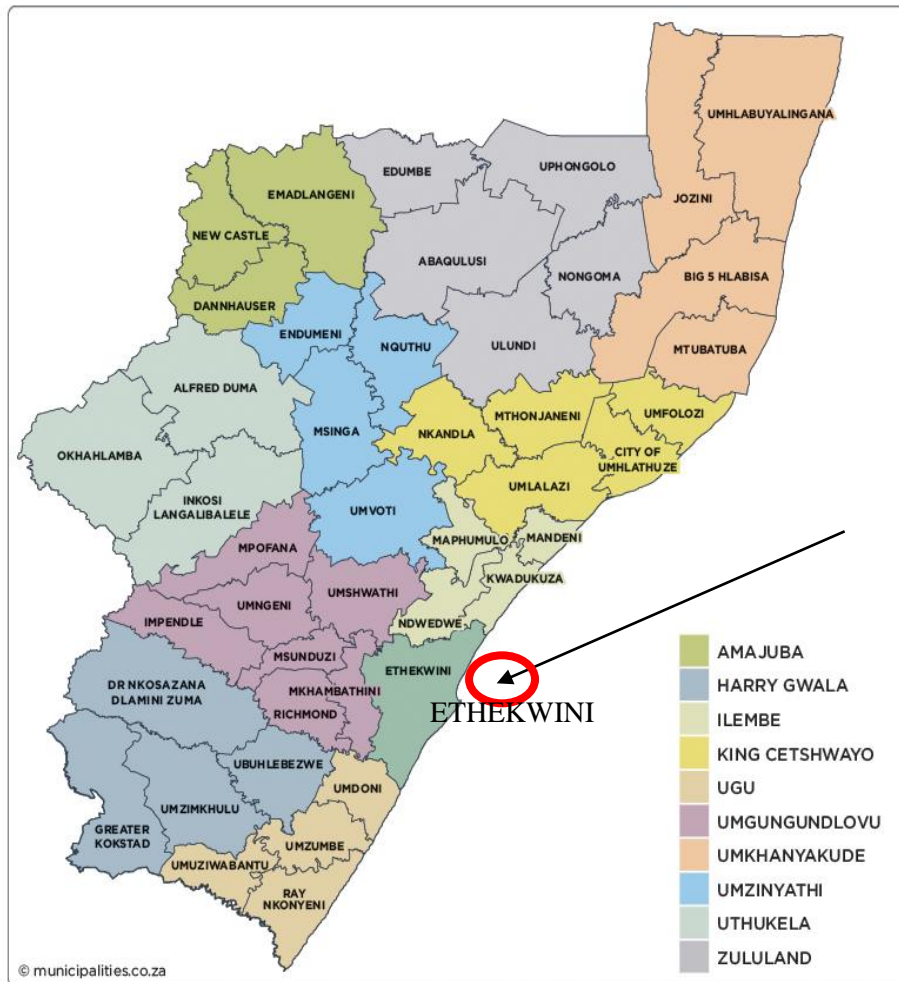
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Map of Municipalities



## Appendix B: Editor's Letter



Barbara Mutula  
Associate member

Membership number: MUT001  
Membership year: March 2019 to February 2020

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[www.editors.org.za](http://www.editors.org.za)

27 August 2019

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that the dissertation written by Nomusa Sithole, titled 'EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED EMPLOYEES AT ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY: A CASE STUDY' was copy edited for layout (including numbering, pagination, heading format, justification of figures and tables), grammar, spelling, punctuation and references by the undersigned. The document was subsequently proofread, and a number of additional corrections were advised.

The undersigned takes no responsibility for corrections/amendments not carried out in the final copy submitted for examination purposes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barbara L. Mutula-Kabange", written over a horizontal line.

---

Mrs. Barbara L. Mutula-Kabange

Copy Editor, Proof reader  
*BEd (UBotswana), BSc Hons Psychology (UKZN),  
MEd Educational Psychology (UKZN)*

**Appendix C:** Letter requesting permission from the participant (Municipal employees)

13 Highland Mews  
26 Argyll Road  
Highland Hills  
Pinetown  
3610

The Participant

Dear Sir/Madam

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH**

I am currently a Masters student in Education Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am presently engaged in a research study. The topic of my research is: *Exploring professional development of selected employees at eThekweni Municipality: A case study*. I would very much like to conduct the study in your workplace about professional development provided by the municipality.

Your identity in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold your autonomy as the participant. You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

You may contact my supervisor or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisor is Prof T.T. Bhengu

Tel. 031-2603534 (office)  
Cell: 083 9475321

E-mail: [bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za).

My contact number:

Cell: 072 243 9190

E-mail: [Nomusa.sithole@durban.gov.za](mailto:Nomusa.sithole@durban.gov.za)

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Ms N. Sithole

---

.....DETACH AND RETURN.....

## **DECLARATION**

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the, purpose and procedures for the study: I have received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from research at any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant

Date

.....

Thanking you in advance

**Appendix D:** Letter to eThekweni Municipal Manger requesting permission conduct research in Municipality.

13 Highland Mews  
26 Argyll Road  
Highland Hills  
Pinetown  
3610

Attention: Municipal Manager  
EThekweni Municipality  
333 Prixley Ka Seme Street  
Durban  
4000

Dear Sir

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Nomusa Sithole, a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfilment, I am further required to conduct research. I therefore seek permission to conduct my research within the eThekweni Municipality on the four regions. The title of my study is: **Exploring professional development of selected employees at eThekweni municipality: A case study.**

This study aims to explore how professional development within the municipality assist the employees in performing their duties. The planned study will focus on the four district within the municipality. The study will use semi-structured interviews with selected employees. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

You may contact my supervisor or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisor is:

Prof T.T. Bhengu

Tel. 031-2603534 (office)

Cell: 083 9475321

E-mail: [bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za).

My contact number:

Cell: 072 243 9190

E-mail: [nomusa.sithole@durban.gov.za](mailto:nomusa.sithole@durban.gov.za)

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Ms N. Sithole

## Appendix E: Interview guide for eThekweni Municipality employees

*[NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the participants and probes are indicated under each question. However, follow-up questions will also be posed depending on the responses of the participants].*

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT EXPERIENCE ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Please tell me about your job responsibility within the municipality. Please elaborate!
- 

Probes: For how long have you been performing these duties?

---

During that period, did you attend any professional development offered by the municipality? if yes, please tell me more about the nature of that programme (the type of skills it focused on, and whether you found it useful or not.

- How has your experience been with the professional development that is being offered by the municipality?
- 

- What areas of your work did that professional development offered in the Municipality address?

Probes: do you believe that the training was relevant for your work? Please explain how you benefitted from that training

-----  
-----  
----



- How has professional development support offered by the municipality been received by fellow employees?

Probes: Comment about whether they feel that it has helped them perform their duties better or not

-----  
-----  
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### **QUESTIONS ABOUT CHALLENGES ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- What has been the challenges on professional development that you have observed? Please elaborate on this!!
- What could have been done better?

- -----  
-----  
-----

- In your view are the programmes offered effective, how?

- -----  
-----  
-----

- Are there other institutions that offer professional development that the Municipality has sent you to? How do you see the training development offered developing in future? Please be specific

- -----  
-----  
-----

- What would be your advice to the Municipality about the professional development?

- -----  
-----  
-----

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ENHANCEMENT**

- What do you think could help enhance professional development provided by the Municipality?
  - .....
  
- Would you recommend the professional development you are receiving to people from other Municipalities?
- .....  
.....  
.....

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS INTERVIEW.**



Pod 1, Second Floor, Intuthuko Junction, 750 Mary Thiphe Street, Umkhumbane, Cato Manor, Durban 4001.  
Tel: 031 322 4513, Fax: 031 261 3405, Fax to email: 086 265 7140, Email: mile@durban.gov.za, Website:  
www.mile.org.za

For attention:  
Chair of Ethics Committee  
College of Humanities  
School of Education  
University of KwaZulu Natal  
Howard Campus  
Durban  
4001

4 May 2017

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT TO STUDENT NOMUSA SITHOLE, STUDENT NUMBER 971157955- - GRANTING  
PERMISSION TO USE ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY AS A CASE STUDY

Please be informed that the Head: eThekweni Municipal Academy (EMA) has considered the request by Ms Nomusa Sithole to use eThekweni Municipality as a research study site leading to the awarding of a Master Of Education degree entitled "Exploring professional development experiences of selected employees at eThekweni municipality: A case study."

We wish to inform you of the acceptance of her request and hereby assure her of our utmost cooperation towards achieving her academic goals; the outcome which we believe will help our municipality improve its service delivery. In return, we stipulate as conditional that she presents the results and recommendations of this study to the related unit/s on completion of her research study.

Wishing Ms Sithole all the best in her studies.

  
Dr. MB Ngubane  
Head : eThekweni Municipal Academy (EMA)  
eThekweni Municipality

05-05-2017  
Date

